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BERTIE:

OR,

LIFE IN THE OLD FIELD.

A HUMOROUS NOVEL.

BY

CAPT. GREGORY SEAWORTHY.

AUTHOR OF "NAG'S HEAD."

"Leves, non praceter solitum."—HORACE.

"Faith, thin! it's a pairt o' me systim, sir!"—THE IRISH TUTOR.

WITH A LETTER TO THE AUTHOR FROM

WASHINGTON IRVING.

PHILADELPHIA:

A. HART, LATE CAREY AND HART.

126 CHESTNUT STREET.

1851.

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PHILADELPHIA:
T. K. AND P. G. COLLINS, PRINTERS.

TO A. HART, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR—

194
24 Apr
To whom so appropriately as to yourself
can I dedicate the following pages? Very few
things could give me so much pleasure as the
knowledge that the volume will seem to you a
worthy token of the hearty regard with which

I am

Yours, always,

GREGORY SEAWORTHY.

194
24 Apr
Wor m s w
PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 15, 1850.

PROLEGOMENA.

TO THE READER.

I.

WISE men are in coveys,
Schoolmasters abroad;
And to hills of science,
Lo! a royal road!
Some are writing folios,
Some are writing odes;
While I worship COMUS,
Only, of the gods.

II.

Some are dropping honey,
Others dropping gall;
I am merely funny—
When I write at all.
Simply to amuse you
Do I choose to write;
All herein that's better
'S accidental—quite.

III.

HOLMES was once too funny
For his valet's good;
So, I've been less merry
Than I really could!
Offer to Minerva,
But reserve a part;
COMUS and VACUNA
Both demand A. HART!

"INTRODUCTORY WORD TO THE READER."

MY DEAR READER:—

Do you know that publishers still cling, with the tenacity of first love, to the time-honored custom of writing a preface? It is verily so! And even my *Prolegomena* will not pass muster in this behalf. Wherefore, though you will not read this preface, and do not care a straw *why* I have written another book, I may as well say, briefly, that I was mainly encouraged so to do by the reception of "NAG'S HEAD," and by kind letters from older brethren, among which is the following:—

"SUNNYSIDE, Sept. 17th, 1850.

"MY DEAR SIR—

"Though I received in due time your letter dated August 11th, your book did not reach me until within a week past. I thank you most heartily for the pleasure afforded me by the perusal. You have depicted scenes, characters, and manners which were in many respects new to me, and full of interest and peculiarity. I allude more especially to the views of Southern life. We do not know sufficiently of the South; which appears to

"me to abound with materials for a rich, original and
"varied literature.

"I hope the success of this first production will be
"such as to encourage you to follow out the vein you
"have opened, and to give us a new series of scenes of
"American life both by sea and land.

"With best wishes for your success,

"I remain, very truly,
"Your obliged friend and servant,

"WASHINGTON IRVING."

BERTIE.

CHAPTER I.

NORFOLK: "THE BETTY WARREN."

———"A rotten carcass of a boat;
The very rats instinctively had quit it."

THE TEMPEST.

WE were not the only sufferers by the gale. We were fortunate for that matter, in comparison with others, that came straggling in like a covey of partridges, scattered by a sportsman and his well-trained pointer. We had escaped with so small an injury as the springing of the head of our foremast, while one vessel, that anchored near us, had been dismasted. They reminded me, as they flocked to the anchorage, of the frightened land-birds, which one sees flying to a ship's rigging, when blown off shore by a westerly gale. They seemed eager to be once more at rest ; and the busy, useful, homely, Lilliputian canal-craft nestled to the wharves as if they did not feel safe, even *there*, from the fury of the still raging storm.

One of these last lay near us. She was a schooner of—possibly forty-five tons. She was laden scuppers-to, with fish ; and the muddy swells gave now and then,

they rose and fell, a glimpse of her name, achieved in no very clerly characters on the much-battered and time-embrowned stern; reminding one of the mysterious hieroglyphics in the wasteful blazonry of the tea companies' importations. Most persons, however, would have decided that the characters were English—as, indeed, they were; to which assertion I hold myself ready to “qualify.” She rode uneasily on the tossing waves, which were most literally casting up mire and dirt; and kept up a fussy, fidgety clatter of ropes, and creaking of booms, and rattle of blocks, and slamming of cabin-doors, as if she longed to hug the dilapidated, rat-haunted old wharf, and thus to *feel* that she was safe.

She must have been built since the flood.

I have just re-perused the whole of the Scripture History from the first chapter down to the resting of the ark, and I am ready to make affirmation that no such craft existed before the building of that vessel; for, if there *had* been such a specimen of naval architecture, tradition would never have suffered the moss to grow over its memory. It is more than probable that she had once boasted a coat of paint, of many colors it must have been, for there were not only spots of palpable red, and green, and black, but shades that, I am very sure, were never legitimately begotten of any of the primary seven. There was a streak of red about the hawse-holes, that gave her a rowdyish look of late hours and gin-drinking; and a glimpse of her bottom, as she rolled testily on the soiled swell, exhibited a shocking scarcity of ship-drapery, of both sheathing and copper.

She was, moreover, very manifestly leaky; whether from some “typhoon” on “the raging canawl,” or from

the more stormy billows of the roadstead above the hospital, I know not. Certain it is that there was a tall cadaverous man, with an antediluvian hat, and a complexion that assured me that he had been shaken well nigh to death with what Shakspeare calls "a burning quotidian tertian, that it is most lamentable to behold"—the ague and fever videlicet—who pumped by the hour. He worked so steadily that I began to think him a part of the machinery of the vessel, until he rose suddenly upright, pulled off the venerable hat, whose years should have prevented the indignity, and, throwing it furiously on the recumbent barrels of shad, exclaimed:—

"Dod dog the leaky old tub! *Je-rooz-lum! Ding it all to dingnation!* Ain't I ben pumpin' here, I should like to know, for the last three hours? Scuppers tew, when I turned out this mawnin', and she 's making water this blessed minnit, four hundred strokes a' hour! Laz'-rus! *You Laz'rus!* lay up here and lend a hand to this 'ere bloody old pump! I wish the old Betty Warren was in Davy Jones' locker!"

The smoke curled sluggishly, and in huge volumes, from the dilapidated old galley, and added fresh swarthiness to the dark, smoke-embrowned, water-soaked sails. The tiller stuck fiercely up, at an angle of fifty degrees. It was lashed amid-ships; but the rudder groaned, and squealed, and thumped in the casing as if it would "shake the sticks out of her." This would have been no very difficult matter; for they were of a piece with the hull. The un-tarred, flax-colored shrouds, and *fuzzy* running-rigging hung down like straggling locks from a head partially bald; and the wind wheezed, and puffed, and

whistled, as it tossed them about—as if it were afraid of bringing the entire top-hamper to the deck. Then there were odd ends of rigging (what is it that they call them at sea?) hanging in slatternly profusion all over the vessel. The starboard davit was fished with a billet of wood. The bowsprit stood horizontally and defiantly out; its nose battered out of all its original lines of form. The windlass looked as if it had survived an attack of paralysis; and the cable might, “to all human appearance,” have been made in the smithies of Tubal Cain, the “instructor of every artificer in brass and iron.”

Attached to the traveler, by a painter, which, for aught I know, may have done duty through Cook’s voyages and the Exploring Expedition, was

“A rotten carcass of a boat;”

so old as to afford another argument (if they knew of it) to the people who give a new version of the Mosaic chronology, in favor of the existence of the earth at a period of which garrulous Tradition has not conceived even in his dreams. There was one thwart in it; and a gourd, and a paddle. It nestled touchingly and filially (it was almost full of water) to the parental side, with a look of uncomplaining dejection, approaching to resignation and meekness; as if it had desperately resolved, and expected as a matter of course, to go down to “the ooze and bottom of the sea” with its decrepit mother.

NORFOLK.

“So, this is Norfolk, eh?” I exclaimed, as I ended my *examination* of the Betty Warren, and looked slowly

around me. The water, as far as the eye could reach, was discolored, and filled with veins of mud. On shore, everything looked bleak and deserted—as most things do in the first days of March; and the hospital was a redeeming feature of the scene as it gleamed pleasantly in the beams of the morning sun. The smoke was blown fiercely aside from the chimney-tops, without ever a curl, for all the world like the white locks of Lear, in

“The peltings of the pitiless storm,”

as you see them in pictures; going horizontally off “into thin air;” whirled and twisted, at last, into impalpable shreds by the fury of the gale. Our single anchor began to drag, and we let go our best bower. With two anchors ahead, and a scope of forty fathoms on the smaller, our good schooner then rode more quietly at her moorings.

It was fortunate for our venerable companion, the Betty Warren, that she was well in shore, where the warehouses protected her, in some measure, from the fury of the wind. As it *was*, she rolled and pitched as if she were wrought into a tearing passion by the obstinate pertinacity of the easterly gale. She threw her nose high in air, now and then, as if she would have said, with her most contemptuous sneer, “I hope you don’t call this ’ere little fluster a *gale o’ wind!*”

And then she would bend her head low down, burying her wrinkled and battered cheeks in the muddy swell; shaking her unkempt locks, the unfettered running-rigging and Irish pen’ant’s in the wind, like a beggar on a market day in March.

It was Sabbath morning. The church bells were ring-

ing pleasantly their sober peal. Some half-a-dozen young men, with whiskers and gossamer canes, all in clerical black, were lounging under the lee of the warehouses, to enjoy rest and sunshine at the same time. There, too, was the hard-handed laborer, with his neatly-clad little boy; the holiday finery and "shining morning face" pleasantly in tune with the warm sunshine, which was lending a sombre beauty to even a March landscape. The rude wind had kindled a ruddy glow upon the faces of both; and they seemed to be enjoying with hearty zest the free gifts of Heaven's breath and smiles, outside of brick and mortar.

As we could not immediately go on shore, I went into the forecabin. One of the crew was writing a letter; his table being constructed out of a couple of trunks. The labor, I venture to say, was more formidable to him than making up the bunt of a topsail. He bent his head starboard and port, like a polka-dancer; wrinkled and distorted his phiz; thrust his tongue finally between his teeth; stopped now and then, and then went on, as one who takes thought what he shall write. His pen leaned fearfully over, like the masts of a pinkey in ballast; and he crossed the *t*'s and dotted the *i*'s with much the same gravity, and deliberation, and stateliness, with which Burleigh is said to have nodded. When at length he had finished it, he laid the pen, with gingerly circumspection, across the inkstand, leaned back, and rubbed his hands with a look of immense satisfaction, as if he had, unlike Keyser, survived a burning at the stake, and been called a "great doer" by Luther himself. Had he been classic in his readings, he would *have broken silence*, and said:—

"Hic extremus labor; hæc meta viarum!"

As it was, he merely said—

"There, I guess I've got that 'ere bloody thing done up and backed ship-shape!"

Little Frank was snoring lustily in his berth; resting as pleasantly upon his hay-bed, and underneath his rude coverlet (the boat-sails), as if he were reposing upon the down of the cygnets of the Ganges. Commend me to genuine physical toil, and a hay-bed! There is nothing like them in the whole world. And then the *conscious* mesmerization into the broad, sunlighted land of dreams. Sancho Panza should have ridden out a north-easterly gale in March, on the North American coast, to have uttered, "with due emphasis, and sound discretion," (do I quote it rightly?) his memorable benediction upon "the man who invented sleep." Eight hours in the lee scuppers, for three or four successive nights; a few hours *a-day!* at the pumps; and his trick at the wheel, during two interminable hours of rain and sleet; and there would have been a ringing, tingling, stirring *emphasis* in his tones when he said, "*Blessings on the man who invented sleep! It covers one all over so—like a garment!*"

Anon, the news-collector came off to us. He reported many accidents of the gale; and after some conversation with the captain about our own damages, the propriety of a protest, and a telegraphic dispatch to the owners, very politely offered me a passage to the ferry-wharf. I packed my trunk, and bade my ship-companions good-by. In half an hour I was in snug quarters at my hotel.

CHAPTER II.

NORFOLK—A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

*"Urbs ANTICUA fuit."**"Leave patience to the gods; for I am human!"*

RICHELIEU.

BEAUTIFUL, romantic Norfolk! I *like* Norfolk. I like its staid, quiet, ancient air of Quaker-like garb, and respectability, and neatness, and substance, and comfort. Whole regiments does it muster of fine women and charming girls. For the midshipman, it is Eden; for the epaulette—Elysium. Old ocean has an arm half way around her, in a doting embrace. A little way from the brick and mortar barrenness of the business thoroughfares, you come to the shrubbery and flowers, and roominess of residences. Farther still, neat white cottages, with wealth of rural attractions, peer pleasantly from the evergreen woods; inviting a glance at the vine-covered trellis, or a bright eye beyond it. By moonlight, Norfolk is enchanting; and of a mild summer night, the moon's "golden haziness" falls as beautifully there as at Rio Janeiro, or Naples; on Melrose, or the Rialto.

Such, at least, was my opinion when I was returning, one evening, during my brief sojourn from a walk through the more frequented streets of "The Ancient Borough." All the world was walking by moonlight. Here, a gray-haired old man was leading merry children along the

crowded thoroughfare. The pale, thoughtful student sauntered slowly on; busy, apparently, in investigating the mineral properties of the dilapidated pavement beneath his feet; while above, there lay the whole heavens, like a silver sea, with isles of gems. Manhood and beauty went side by side, and over all the throng there was the witching of the soft moonlight, giving to furrowed brows the air of beauty, and to "ruins gray" the charm of proportion. A fair young girl passed me. A profusion of dark curls fell upon her neck and shoulders. Her form was of faultless outline, and her step that of a sylph. Her dark eye glistened, as she leaned lovingly and trustfully towards a young officer, whose uniform glittered in the moonlight as they sauntered along. Ever and anon, the young lover (I was sure he was an accepted suitor) drew his form proudly up to its full princely height with an air of defiance; as if an ungentle look from a passer-by at that fair girl would have provoked him into an "incensement" like that which Viola was taught to expect in the blood-thirsty, fire-eating Sir Andrew Aguecheek: "So implacable that satisfaction could be none, but by pangs of death and sepulchre!"

I caught myself "sighing like a furnace;" and was turning to go to the hotel, when I was somewhat familiarly accosted, in the unmistakable twang of eastern Maine, with

"Haow dew yaou dew?"

I accepted the proffer of a broad, hard hand; and received a shake that would have delighted the sage of Quincy in his most vigorous days.

"I am quite well, I thank you," I replied, a little ceremoniously. "But I——"

"O, ya-a-s! Exactly. You don't know me, I guess you was a goin' tu say. No more you *don't*. I might ha' known it. My name's Professor Matters."

"Professor Matters," said I, a little mystified, "I am happy to make your acquaintance. May I ask what chair you occupy at the present time?"

"Hey?"

"I mean, what college you——"

"O ho! now I understand ye. I don't zactly b'long to no college; but I'm a professor of what minister calls hydrology."

I was now thoroughly mystified.

"I hope you'll excuse me for takin' so much liberty; but I knowed you was a Yankee, and so I thought I'd speak tew ye. It's a rale satisfaction tu me tu meet a man that walks as if he'd suthin to walk *for*; and not like these 'ere sleepy Southerners, that walk jest as if they'd had the yaller fever. I won't keep ye, though," added he, seeing that I was getting uneasy; "good night! Maybe we'll see one 'nother ag'in."

"May the gods avert it!" said I, devoutly, as he turned away; and I returned to the hotel with the resolution to leave Norfolk on the following day. I made the proper inquiries of the clerk. There was no vessel, he said, going South, sooner than the day after the morrow.

On the following day, a friend invited me to visit the Pennsylvania. I declined; giving as my excuse the fact that I had often been on board of her.

"But there are some ladies going on board."

"That alters the case."

"You'll go?"

"Yes."

"Sharp three, this afternoon."

"Very well."

Accordingly, at three o'clock, I found a gay party in the act of embarkation at Ferry wharf. Two of the Pennsylvania's cutters, with their gay pennants flying, were alongside the wharf; and both were closely stowed with ladies and gentlemen.

"Shove off there, forward," said Lieut. P——; "let fall! give way!" and our neatly dressed boat's crew bent to their oars. We were welcomed by a march from the band, as we reached the accommodation-ladder; and, as we stepped on deck, were most politely and cordially received. The few necessary presentations were got through with the ease and tact belonging always to the well-bred gentlemen of the quarter-deck. There was no parade, no bustle, no fuss.

As the dinner-hour had not yet arrived, we strolled about the decks of the noble ship, and our fair neighbors were initiated (somewhat briefly and imperfectly, if the truth must be said) into the names, uses, and mysteries of divers parts of the armament and rigging. I was in unusually good spirits that day. Chance consigned to my civilities Miss Rosalie D——, a charming young woman, whose acquaintance I remember as one of the pleasantest in my life, and who, alas! has married and gone away to the far South. May she live forever! We had a delightful chat. I had answered her thousand-and-one questions about the ship; and was getting into rather a dangerous habit of looking into her eyes—there was never a finer eye in all the world—when, just as we were coming out of the commodore's cabin, there appeared to me, hat in hand, and with a smile that en-

gulfed all other dimensions in the single one of openness, my friend Professor Matters.

"Human natur!" he exclaimed. "Is this yaou? Why, haow du yu du?"

"I am quite well, I thank you."

"Glad to hear it! How dew *yaou* dew, ma'am?" added he, turning to my fair companion.

She seemed to get the bearings, if I may use a marine phrase, at once. It was impossible to be *angry* with the man, and, therefore, I felt a sensation of delighted relief when she replied, easily,

"I thank you; I am in excellent health and spirits. Have I had the pleasure to meet you before to-day?"

"Quite likely, quite likely, ma'am. I'm pretty tol'bly well known here to Norfolk. My name's Professor Matters."

"Professor Matters, I am delighted to make your acquaintance. I hope Mistress Matters and the young Matters are quite well."

"You're aout *this* time!"

"How?"

"They aint no such Lady as Mrs. Matters."

"I'm delighted to hear it."

"Git aout! I——"

"Excuse me for interrupting you. Here comes my friend Lieutenant P——; and I am going to request him to invite you to dine with us. Lieut. P——, may I beg the privilege of having another plate laid?"

"Most certainly. For whom?"

"Permit me to present you. Professor Matters, allow me to present to you my friend Lieut. P——. Lieut.

P——, this is the celebrated Professor Matters, of—*what col——?*”

“Ah! Steventown, ma’am; State of Maine.”

“Of Steventown.”

The Lieut. entered into the spirit of the joke, and did the honors with the profoundest gravity. Even Commodore ——, who is a bit of a wag, aided in the mystification of the professor, and spun him some yarns of his voyages that caused his listener to open his eyes in wonderment, as he exclaimed, most fervently,

“*Git a-o-u-t!* SHO! ye don’t *say* so! Commodore, you can take my hat!”

On one of these occasions, he actually offered the venerable hat to the commodore. As he did so, he caught a glimpse of a letter inside.

“I never showed this letter, I b’lieve, commodore,” he said, as he looked at the superscription. “That’s from my friend Professor Jenkins. You may read it ef yew want tew.”

The commodore put on his spectacles and read the superscription—

“PROF. FATTY MATTERS,”

“Norf——”

“Connecticut river! scissors! darnation!” exclaimed the professor. “Didn’t I tell him to write it F. MATTERS? I say, commodore, don’t tell anybod——.”

But it was too late. Lieut. P—— and my fair friend had heard it. The word, in sea-phrases, was “passed along,” and then came a smile, a grin, a titter, a choking, a *burst* of uncontrollable laughter; and this grew

to a roar as the professor threw his dilapidated hat furiously down on deck, and himself went off into an *Ætnean* convulsion of merriment.

"Don't say nothin'!" said he, as the roar subsided.
"Don't mention it! I'll stand treat all round!"

Never before or since has the ward-room of the Old Pennsylvania so rung with loud, long, irrepressible laughter. To describe the scene at the dinner-table would be too long a digression. I must defer it for a future day. We returned on shore.

In the evening, as I was chatting with mine host, I heard the bell of a neighboring church.

"Is there a meeting?" I asked.

"Yes; at Mr. A——'s church. Would you like to go?"

"Very much. I have heard something of Mr. A——."

We went to church. The house was thronged with "the beauty and fashion" of the city. Mine host's pew was speedily filled, and the services had already commenced, when, with a look as sanctimonious as that of Joseph Surface, in came my friend the professor. He stopped at the door of mine host's pew (who politely gave him his own seat), nodded familiarly to me, deposited his hat, and, drawing forth an immense bandana, so flourished it as to draw upon him the inquiring gaze of the congregation. He, all-unconscious (apparently so, at least), fastened his eyes upon the preacher.

The hymn was given out. The professor declined the proffer of a hymn-book, and pulled from his pocket a book of his own, which, to judge from its appearance,

might have been used in the days of the covenanters. The tune was Old Windham.

O! Handel and Haydn! O! the Boston Academy!
O! Spirit of sweet sounds!

With an earnest zeal, not according to knowledge, and an exertion of lungs which sent the blood to his cheeks and forehead, the professor broke ground in the opening notes of Old Windham. Loud, shrill, sharp, fierce, unmitigated, and remorseless, like unto

"The notes that erst blew down
Old Jericho's substantial town,"

partaking the lulling soothingness of complaining saws, in their teething agonies, the softness of the notes of donkeys, and guinea-fowls, and peacocks, intermingled with broken-winded clarionets, tin horns, the voices of belligerent cats, and the breaking of much crockery, was heard the professor's voice. It was all *fortissimo*; no cadence, but unbroken "monotony of wire;" with now and then a nasal, tremulous shake on some note, a whole measure behind the choir. It met you like a dry north-easter, in turning a corner, on a February day, in the City of Notions. Elderly people looked puzzled—waggish people looked interested—humorous souls were in a state of what is sometimes called intense fructification—the minister rested his head on his hands—the deacons frowned—the girls tittered—while, for myself, I bowed my head to the book-rack, and held my aching sides.

- The day is long past; but now and then, as I have done while writing these lines, do I live over again the roar of laughter in which I indulged that night, as I laid my head upon my pillow.

Having decided to leave Norfolk in the morning, I went to the clerk, and gave the necessary directions about the disposal of my baggage. I remember the intense satisfaction with which I congratulated myself on the skill with which I should spring the mine on my new and somewhat over-sociable acquaintance. I do not now recollect, however, whether or no I had ever heard of the proverb which recommends people not to shout until they are fairly out of the woods ; or of that other which speaks of coming for wool and going home shorn. If I had, I must here confess to the reader that I had either wholly forgotten the same, or else that the seed of wisdom had fallen on stony ground.

I was early astir the next morning. The clock told five as I stepped to the office.

"I hope Mr. Seaworthy has found his stay in Norfolk agreeable," said the polite clerk, as the porter lifted my trunk.

"I thank you. *Too* agreeable, by far. I should have been away a fortnight ago."

"You take passage in the Betty Warren?"

"Yes."

"I'm afraid you'll find a dull berth of it ; and, if it rains, you'll be sorry you didn't wait for a better vessel. There'll be a dozen of them going out in a day or two."

"I thank you ; I have a special fancy for the Betty Warren. Good morning."

"Good morning, sir."

"Pleasant passage to you, Mr. Seaworthy."

"Thank you."

Directing the porter to go to the wharf of Hardy and

Brothers, I stepped into Barclay's to buy me a map of "The Carolinas"—an indispensable article, let me say, to any one who travels thither. I had opened one of them, and was examining it, when a loud, shrill, ringing, nasal voice at my elbow exclaimed—

"Guess *I* must hev one o' them 'ere! Scuse me, sir; but 'ud you 'low me to look at that 'ere map?"

"Certainly," said I; and I turned to look at my neighbor. He had removed from his head the most dilapidated white hat which I have yet seen on the American continent; deposited the same on the counter, with as careful a solicitude as Brummel would have laid a cravat in the same place; and, without any signs of recognition, drew a pair of rusty spectacles from a greasy case, adjusted them, held the map off at arm's length, and gazed thereon in utter abstraction.

"Um! Ya-a-s!" said he, at length. "Don't seem to be many towns in Ca'lina, anyhow."

I had a moment's leisure to observe him. He was a strongly built man, of—perhaps forty years of age. His features were large and strongly marked, particularly the nose, which was prominent, distinctive, unmistakable, and emphatic. The hair was long, and of raven blackness; and a long, matted lock hung obliquely over a bald spot on the top of his head, the precise locality on which Uncle Ned, immortal in song, had never "a hair of him for memory." His eyes were very dark and piercing, but intelligent and good-humored withal; and his whole cast of features and frame betokened more than ordinary vigor of body and mind. There was a goodly array of wrinkles centering at the outer corner of the eye, which gave a world of emphasis to

the genuine twinkles of fun and drollery which occasionally flashed from it. He was looking down intently upon the map, his head bent low over it, when suddenly he seemed to have found what he sought, for he looked up at the bookseller, and said—

“Mister, I’ll *take* this ’ere. Scuse me, sir”—turning to me—“I forgot that I took it from yaou. I—ah!”—here was a start of surprise, which would have made his fortune in a provincial theatre—“*how dew yew DEW?* Glad to *see* ye. When d’ye git off?”

“To-day,” I replied, in answer to the last question.

“To-day, hey? Why, I’m goin’ to-day myself. P’r’aps we’ll meet ag’in somewhere or ’nother.”

“Very likely.”

“Wal, mister, here’s the change. Tew shillin’s I think you called it?”

“No, sir; three.”

“Ah! wal, that’s more’n I ever paid afore. Beats all natur how these ’ere South’ners dew stick on the price.”

“Kin you tell me”—turning to me—“the best route intew North Ca’lina? I contemplate takin’ a tower over there.”

“The most direct, perhaps, is the stage route. I’m a stranger here, however; and Mr. Barclay can tell you more accurately.”

“Wal, I’ll be much obleeged tew him.”

“You can go by the railroad, if you choose,” said Mr. B——, politely; “or by stage; or by the canal.”

“*What* canal?”

“The Dismal Swamp Canal.”

“Git aout! Who’d ’a thought that ’ere canal begun *here* to Norfolk? P’r’aps *yew’ll* go that way?”

"Possibly I may."

"Wal, anyhow, I hope we may run ag'in one 'nother once more. No doubt we *shall*, somewhere 'nother. Good mornin', gentlemen!"

"Good morning," I replied; and Mr. B. outvied me in the politeness of leave-taking.

I drew a long breath of relief at my escape; paid for my map, and was speedily on board the Betty Warren. I found all hands swaying, with might and main, on a huge cask in the hold. The captain informed me that there had been some mistake in the stowage; and that it was therefore necessary to break out a part of his cargo. He would get away, he thought, about one o'clock. I returned to the hotel; passed the morning with the newspapers; and, on my way to the vessel, between twelve and one o'clock, stepped into Myers' for a lunch. I had finished it, and was paying for it, when, forth from the stall adjoining my own, adorned, as before, with the never-to-be-forgotten white hat, came my friend the professor.

"Ah! Mr. Seaworthy; how are ye *now*? We manage, somehow 'nother, to git together *often*."

"We certainly *do*, sir."

"Mr. Myers, let me introduce my friend Mr. Seaworthy!"

I bowed, of course. Mr. Myers was pleased to say, with a smile and a bow,

"SIR! Mr. Seaworthy, I'm happy of your acquaintance. Sir, you're a gentleman and a scholar!"

I bowed.

"Say you'll git away to-day, Mr. Seaworthy?"

"I think I *shall*. Good morning, Professor Matters."

And I turned from him just as his lips were opening to ask how, when, and where?

"Good mornin' tew ye, Mr. Seaweathery," replied my friend; "p'r'aps we'll meet ag'in somewhere 'nother."

"May it be during the Millennium!" muttered I; and I made my way to the wharf.

CHAPTER III.

GETTING UNDER WAY.

"Cras ingens iterabimus æquor."

MUCH to my annoyance, I now found that the schooner would not get away until three in the afternoon ; at which time the skipper assured me he should positively get under way. His mate had engaged, he said, to take another passenger ; but if he, the passenger, were not on board in time, the vessel would not wait for him.

I will not hazard my reputation for veracity by undertaking to say how often I consulted my watch during the two succeeding hours. At last, at a quarter before three, Captain Ragsdale came puffing along with the last of the stores, and gave orders to get under way.

"B'low there!"

"Hello!"

"Come on deck, now, and let's git the bloody old Betty under way. Bear a hand now, you Laz'rus!"

"Sir."

"Luse that 'ere jib. You Sam Hines, ontie that ar fo'sail!"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"H'ist away now!"

"Laz'rus, luse"—so the skipper said *loose*—"the

mainsail thar ! Be on yer pins now ! Cast off that ar starn fast ! This-a-way now, an' help one h'ist the mainsail !"

"Ain't you goin' to wait for the passenger?" inquired Lazarus.

"No!" shouted Captain Ragsdale. "I wouldn't wait for the Gov'nor! I——"

"Hold on there! *Yaou* ! Boy ! I say !" shouted somebody, as Lazarus was lifting the bow-fasts.

I looked up. There, wheezing like a victim to the phthisic, his venerable and ubiquitous white hat held firmly in his hand, was—my friend PROFESSOR MATTERS!

"Has the Old Man of the Sea reappeared in the flesh?" was my groaning query to myself.

"Yaou boy, what's yer name?"

"Name Laz'rus."*

"Laz'rus *what*?"

"Name Laz'rus."

"Wal, jest hold on tew that 'ere rope a minnit till I git my baggage aboard, or by the Great Horn Spoon you'll never see Edentown ! Here 'tis naow !"

And he pointed to a truck which had just made its appearance on the wharf. On it were two barrels, and, as I found on a nearer approach, a bald, cadaverous, dejected, superannuated hair trunk. There was a trifling delay in getting the barrels on board, as they proved to be of enormous weight ; and the skipper had, it seemed, no other resource than to cut the mousing of the peak halyard, and use it (the halyard) for a *fall*. At last the baggage was on board. The barrels were stowed amidships, and the trunk was borne to the cabin. I caught

* A negro says "Name John;" never "my name is," &c.

a glimpse of the card, as it passed me, on which, in large and somewhat unclerkly capitals, appeared

“PROFESSOR F. MATTERS,

STEVENTOWN, *Maine.*”

 “*This side up, with great care.*”

“Cast off that ar bow-fast!”

“Ay, ay, sir.”

“H’ist away on yer jib now!”

“Ay, ay, sir.”

“Stan’ by the peak halyards thar! it’s goin’ to blow a perfect hurricane!”

Even so. In the hurry of getting under way, none had noticed the threatening cloud; but it was evident that we were about to encounter a severe squall. It was not long in coming; and, fortunately for us, we had neared the opposite shore so as to be well under the lee of the buildings. As it was, the violence of the squall was such as to part the jib-halyard, and down came the sail, shivering and flapping with a fierceness that seemed likely to tear it into shreds.

High uprose the voice of the startled skipper, in notes scarcely less loud than those with which Satan is said to have called to his prostrate legions.

“JE—ROOZ—LUM! Sam, lay out thar on that ar jib-boom, and tie up that ar sail! Dont mind the spatter-in’!”—(the water was flying merrily over the bows). “Times like these ’ere, duty *must* be done!”

“Shall I steer for you?” I asked.

“*Can* you steer?”

“Try me.”

“Wal, if you *can*, you’ll oblige me, for that ar jib ’ll go to Davy Jones ef I don’t go and ’tend to it myself.”

He went forward. My friend the professor had been holding on to the low quarter-railing during the squall. He now looked round to me with a ludicrous air of overpowering terror, and asked,

"Do yew think we're in much—in much da—danger?"

"Not the least in the world."

"Wal, I can't help feelin' oneasy. I can't swim, and I don't like the looks o' things nohow. I wish I'd tuck the stage."

"I wish you had!" thought I; but I assured him there was no danger.

"DANGER!" exclaimed the skipper, who had just returned from splicing the halyard and setting the jib; "to be sure there ain't no danger. This 'ere ain't a patch to some gales on the Pasquotank and old Albemarle. I'll show you somethin' when we get off the mouth o' the Chowan.* Why, I've seen worse blows 'n this on the canawl!"

"Git aout!"

"True, as my name's Jeemes Ragsdale."

"SHO!"

"Fact."

"Couldn't you set me ashore, cap'n?"

"Too late. Besides, the squall's over. For'ard thar!"

"Sir."

"Set the gaff-topsail!"

"Ay, ay, sir."

We were now passing the Navy Yard, and the Pennsylvania's band was playing.

* Pronounced Cho-awn.

"Wal, if that don't beat all natur," exclaimed the professor; "beats the Steventown band all holler!"

"Yes, it's mighty fine!" replied the skipper; "but what's the use on't all? She's a mighty nice vessel, but she costs a blame sight more'n she's worth!"

"I used to think so, tew, cap'n," replied the professor; "but the trewth is, that ef the public money didn't go that way, it 'ud go another. Folks will have their 'lowance o' blood, and thunder, and glory; t'ain't no use talkin'. I was out to South Ameriky tew years ago. There was some locations there where the dirty Portygesse and Spanishers couldn't git enough to eat; but they must have their glorifications for all that; and them that cussed the government most was al'ays fust to jine in, and shout hooror! The most paradin'est military feller I ever seen was one o' them cholers on the Spanish Main; and he lived in a little doggerly of a house, built out o' the ribs of a sulphur-bottom whale. There was Jim Simmons up to Steventown——Stuck, I swow! Cap'n, you're stuck!"

We were indeed aground.

"Wal, don't you spose I *knows* it?" replied the skipper, a little nettled at being thus interfered with, in the discharge of his duty. "I never *could* keep the run o' the bloody channel along *here*; but anywhere else, I knows it as well as the man 'at dug it out!"

"Sartin, cap'n, sartin. I didn't mean no 'fence. Don't get riled. 'Keep your temper' is my rewl. I seen it once over the cap'n's office 'board of a steamboat."

We were soon off the bar, and, following the narrow and difficult channel between the low but picturesque shores of the river, we reached the locks just at nightfall.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VOYAGE.—THE CANAL.

" Illi robur et æs triplex
Circa pectus erat, qui *fragilem* truci
Commisit pelago *ratem*
Primus!"—HORAT.

THE professor's fears subsided when we had fairly entered the canal. When, however, we had got through the short cut, and re-entered the river, another squall took us on our starboard quarter. Away went the gaff topsail sheet; blocks rattled; the sails flapped with a noise that was almost deafening; the pig, the buckets, and the firewood slid furiously into the lee scuppers, and I fully expected to see our top-hamper go by the board. The professor got hold of the weather tiller-rope, and clung to it with a strain that would have parted any similar piece of rigging of less staunch materials. His whole reliance seemed to be in the skipper. This last functionary was now bareheaded, his long thin locks of uncombed hair blown fiercely back from his weather-browned face; his form erect; his eye flashing, and gleaming at every suspicious point of his marine defences. He had no very great confidence, I was sure, in the qualities of the Betty Warren; but no sailor, however much he abuses the vessel in which he sails, will ever quietly *suffer another person to do it.*

"Blast the bloody old tub!" exclaimed the mate; "I wish she'd go to the bottom!"

"Oh! my dear sir!" groaned the professor, "don't say so. It's fairly flyin' in the face o' Providence. Oh-h-h! Dew yew think she'll tip over, Mr. Seaworthy?"

And, without waiting for my reply, he began to say a line from

"When I can read my title clear,"

when Captain Ragsdale, whose ire had been roused by the mate's disrespectful remark concerning the vessel, broke ground with

"Who the h— are you, Sam Hines, to be blartin' out sich stuff 'bout this wussul? They ain't 'nother sich a craft on this canawl."

"I don't think they *is*," muttered the mate.

"What's that? Say that ar agin', and ef I don't send you to plant oysters my name ain't Jeems Ragsdale! You poor corn-chawin' land-lubber! go for'ard thar, and stan' by to take in sail!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" growled the mate, who did not seem anxious to provoke the wrathful skipper to the execution of his ominous threat; and he went forward.

The squall abated, sail was taken in, and we were soon "locked through" into the Dismal Swamp Canal. A little negro stood by a span of mules, ready to tow us. Another span soon came. The drivers sprang upon the backs of two of the mules, and away we went. The professor seemed reserved and thoughtful, and I did not molest him. All was new to me. The drivers kept up a plaintive and monotonous song, improvising in their humble style, and filling the woods, leagues around, with echoes.

Why is it that boatmen and sailors are more musical than other laborers? The sailor in the forecastle, and at his work; the gondolier at his oar; (the boatmen on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal call their boats "gundalos!") the ferryman—all are singers. Blacksmiths whistle. Tailors are taciturn. Carpenters are quiet. Shoemakers are merry; but your sailor, or waterman, is almost always a singer. If he be unable to sing, ten to one that he has a rickety old accordeon, violin, or an asthmatic flute, with which he offers whole hecatombs of slaughtered crotchets and quavers upon Apollo's altars. The more deaf the divinity to his importunate prayers, the more numerous the sacrificial offerings. The most persevering votary of the art I ever saw was a mulatto, at sea, upon whose hardened ear fell unheeded the dying groans and complaining sighs of suffering semibreves and minims, whose existence he cut short "*aequo pede*," with the stride and ruthlessness of the grim reaper who cuts

"The bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between."

I suppose it must be *motion* that provokes this musical development; for your stage-coach driver is always a singer.

The quaint and somewhat mournful strain of the drivers seemed to have awakened a responsive chord in the breast of Captain Ragsdale; for he came pensively down the ladder while I was making some notes of the day's occurrences in my journal, and took in hand with gingerly care an old flute.

"Was I fond of music?" he asked.

"*Very.*"

"And so be I," ejaculated the professor.

"Would he disturb me by playing?"

"Not the least in the world."

And without farther parley, he leaned far back in his chair his long, lank, macilent frame, blew into the end of the instrument, snapped the key, and with some such pensiveness as Don Quixote may be supposed to have displayed when he sung

"Love with idleness combined
Will unhinge the tender mind,"

to the enamored Altisidora, he ran his fingers over the holes, as if to quiet and subdue rather than encourage and call forth the elfin medley of startled quavers that came tumbling over each other at the first potent blast of that terrible conjuration. Thirds, fourths, fifths, octaves; intervals before unheard of, and never since spanned by human skill, poured resistlessly forth upon the startled air, and the old canal,

"——— unconscious of a flood,
Whose dull, brown Naiads ever sleep in mud,"

seemed to simper its smiling approval by the faint dimple that gathered in its swarthy cheek. The professor was delighted. Strength, and not skill, was evidently his musical standard. Sam Hines and black Lazarus came aft, and sat down near the door. Primus, too, a negro who was at the helm, was evidently beginning to neglect his duty, so absorbed was he by the music. Old Lonzy, a bull-dog, and Jack, a terrier, came to the companion-way and stood looking with canine solemnity at the rapt performer. The former cast some inquiring glances at me, as I sat writing; and I judged, from his

puzzled air, that he had failed to satisfy himself what it all meant.

"Dod rot it all, Primus! can't ye keep her off o' the tow-path?" shouted the skipper. "You triffin' feller! you ain't no 'count, nohow, to steer. Laz'rus, take that ar helm!"

"Ay, ay, sir."

The captain now went on deck, and the professor and myself turned in. Just as I was getting drowsy, my companion rose on his elbow and said to me, in a low tone,

"I say, neighbor."

"Well?"

"Yaou remember the dinner 'board the Pennsylvany?"

"Yes."

"'Bout my *name*?"

"Yes."

"Wal, don't laff 'bout it. It's a serious subject. Now I don't keer to hev it git aout. The trewth is, 'tween you and me, my name's Funnyford. My grand'-ther had a pardner o' that name. But I was al'ays rather stocky, and so they got to callin' me Fatty. Professor Jinkins heered some one call me so, and he thought it 'as my name."

"Well, my friend Funnyford, I——"

"I'd a leetle ruther yew'd call me *professor*, ef its all the same tew ye. Fact is, people 'll call me Funny, sure's ye're born, if they git hold of it."

"Very good, professor; I will try not to betray you."

"*Dew*, if ye please; and I'll al'ays do the fair thing, and stan' shot till we git to Edentown. Good night!"

"Good night, professor ;" and I slept. The moon was well nigh at the full, and I did not rest well. One sleeps more soundly, I fancy, in a dark night. Be that as it may, I could hear, in my half-waking repose, the monotonous song of the drivers ; their emphatic blows on the "unfed sides" of the jaded mules, and their chirrupping, intermingled with divers epithets and persuasives not proper to be set forth in this history, to quicken the cattle's motion. Captain Ragsdale conjured forth the crickets with his orchestral snore, and the smoke-browned little cabin rung with their song. The rats were performing

"Lavoltas high and swift corantos"

behind the bulkhead ; the tow-rope rustled over the low shrubbery on the bank ; the rudder squeaked, and the water curled and eddied in a low musical ripple beneath the counter. Ever and anon, the professor would start feverishly from his troubled slumber, with a hysteric, "Oh ! O dear ! O cap'n !" manifestly dreaming of the ballad-famous catastrophe,

"Then three times round went our gallant ship,
Then three times round went she ;
Then three times round went our gallant ship,
And she sunk to the bottom of the sea !"

At last, I sank into a profound sleep, and when I awoke it was day.

"Morning in the Old Dominion," I said to myself as I stepped on deck. We were passing a hamlet on the canal, called, if I remember well, Deep Creek. The spring birds were singing ; the sun shone gloriously ; the air was fresh and bracing ; all was quiet and all was

beautiful. So far, the Dismal Swamp had been anything but dismal. The drivers were lying athwart the backs of their cattle, which (I long to call them *who*) plodded sorrowfully along, with heads downcast, as if life had lost for them its tinge of romance; and they were thinking of other and younger days, when, peradventure, their hearts had been left "fracted and corroborated" by some coquettish jilt of a bright-eyed filly.

The morning wore pleasantly away. The professor busied himself by some abstruse calculations with pencil and paper. I wrote a letter and a page in my journal. A negress, of more than ordinary comeliness and intelligence, accompanied by a very pretty child, took passage with us. I heard her say, in reply to some questioner on the tow-path, that she was "guoin to North Ca'lina visitin'." Her husband came on board soon after, but, poor fellow! he had forgotten his "pass," and was obliged to go back for it. We could not wait for him, and he had a long walk of it to overtake us. Lonzy, the dog, came ever and anon to the companion-way, and looked in upon us with an air of one who is endeavoring to fathom a mystery. He would look, now at the professor's cabalistic formulas, now at the motions of my pen; and then, after a brief consultation with the shaggy little terrier, both the dogs put their paws on the highest step of the ladder, and gravely observed our motions.

We had been hoping for a pleasant day. As the morning wore away, however, we saw some most unmistakable signs of rain. It grew sultry. The cattle trod drowsily along, and the drivers walked silently beside *them*. *The dogs* stretched themselves at full length

upon deck. The professor turned in for a nap. As I went on deck at noon, we were passing the hotel, not far, if I mistake not, from Lake Drummond. The stage-coach drove up. There were two or three gentlemen inside, who seemed quite too languid to get out; and I caught a glimpse of a fair girl in a mourning-dress, whose head was bound tightly with a handkerchief. Light as was the load, the horses—three leaders abreast and two wheel-horses—ambled slowly and wearily along, oppressed, like ourselves, by the sultriness of the weather.

At length, as we were finishing our dinner, down came the rain. It began with a thin and almost impalpable drizzle.

"I'm mighty 'fraid we're guoin to hev a wet time on't," said the captain, as he donned an oil-cloth jacket and sou'wester. "What do *you* think, professor?"

"I think we're goin' to hev an etarnal drizzle, an' no mistake!"

He was not far wrong. The rain came faster and faster; the tow-path was speedily a mass of mud; the mules and their drivers, as well as the man at the helm, were dripping with water; the dogs looked wistfully into the cabin; and the captain came below, and sat moodily down, with his head on his hands, evidently anticipating "a wet time on't;" and knowing full well, by sore experience, the sad import of the expression. We discovered, to our great disappointment, that the cabin leaked. But one single corner was there where the drops did not ooze through the deck. Thence it trickled along the carlines down upon our heads. As fortune

would have it, the corner in which Professor Matters and myself were sitting proved to be passably dry.

Night came on; and, after a late supper, we endeavored to contrive some plan for a night's rest. To sleep in the berths was out of the question; for the rain was dropping merrily into them, and we had been obliged before nightfall to roll up the bedding, and stow it away in a locker. We spread a mattress upon the cabin floor, shut the doors, and betook ourselves to repose. I believe some grammarians reckon *repose* among the active verbs. I beg leave to say that I favor that classification. Never, to the best of my knowledge and belief, have I so vigorously endeavored to sleep. I counted whole thousands; I listened to the pattering of the rain; I held my eyelids firmly together, and resolutely ignored the fact that the professor was beginning a snore, which, if I might judge *ex pede Herculem*, would prove a perfect typhoon when the drowsy god should fairly encompass his plethoric proportions in the emphatic hug of the "wee sma' hours." I groaned aloud at the very thought of it.

"What's the matter, neighbor?" asked the professor, in a sympathetic tone.

"Nothing at all, I thank you, professor; but would you oblige me by turning upon your side?"

"Which side?"

"It is immaterial; say the *left* side."

"The left side it *is*. Good night!"

"Good night, professor."

"Pleasant dreams to ye!"

"Thank you."

Vain is the help of man. Blessed is he that expecteth

nothing. Forth from the professor's nostril, *ab imis sedibus*, come forth the clarion notes, now in a strain which might relatively be musically denominated *pianissimo*, now in a *crescendo* movement; it swelled like the north wind in a Carolina forest of pines, to *forte* and fortissimo; now plaintive,

"As when Scotchmen grind undying notes upon hand-organs,"

now sharp, short, decisive; stirring one's blood like the shriek of a bagpipe *in extremis*; now long drawn, sustained, like a colonel's shout to distant squadrons; now crisp, abrupt, emphatic, startling; now—but will the reader pardon the futile effort to describe it? He has but to take down *Horseshoe Robinson* from the shelf (if it were at hand I would copy the extract), and read how that hero snored, on a certain night when the heroism of a girl saved both himself and Butler from threatened peril. The "grunt" and "snort" of Galbraith, on that occasion, might possibly aid the imagination of the reader in forming some faint conception of the manner in which the professor made night hideous to me. We made but little progress. The cattle were jaded, and they crept wearily along in the mud, possibly two and a half miles the hour. Once, too, in passing another boat, we got aground; and it was a long time before we got under way again. The captain came below and kindled a small fire; but the wood was wet, and it hissed and sung, and smouldered, and flickered, until he gave up the attempt.

I had risen upon my elbow to witness his exertions, and I maintained the same attitude after he stepped out upon deck and closed the cabin-doors. Old "Lonzy"

crept in unperceived, dripping all over with the rain ; and, setting his feet broad apart on the cabin-floor, he gave himself so vigorous a shake that his ears and tail were for the moment invisible. The weight of the showe fell upon the upturned countenance of my happy fellow-lodger ! He rallied a little, and drew the sleeve of his coat (neither of us had undressed) across his lips, and rolled over. It would seem that the captain had not fastened the cabin-door ; for I heard the terrier scratching for admittance. In a moment more he succeeded in effecting an entrance, just in time to escape a wrathful kick from Lazarus. That worthy was at the helm, and the blow he meant for the terrier fell harmlessly (to all save himself) upon the cabin-door. I could hear him groan a moment after,

“ Ah—h—h ! Cricky ! Plague take de feller ! I bin broke my toe, sartin ! Dod dog de luck ! Gwine to rain for eber, I b’lieve ! ”

All unconscious, however, of the perils he had escaped, the dripping terrier, whose every particular hair looked as if it were conscious of the apostolic injunction to “ come out and be separate,” paused in precisely the same place where “ Lonzy ” had paused a few minutes before, and again the rains descended, and the floods came in a blinding shower upon the face of the snoring professor.

“ *Connecticut RIVER ! Scissors ! H—l !* ” roared the professor, “ who done that ’ere ? ”

And so saying, his eye fell upon the poor terrier, who was now getting into the proper attitude for the second shake. In the dim light of the smouldering fire, he seized upon the nearest object (it chanced to be one of

his own boots) for the infliction of due chastisement. Had the blow reached the poor terrier, there is no telling how soon the author of these pages might have had occasion to write his epitaph—

“*Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit.*”

He had the discretion to vanish—and he survived. The blow, however, upset the oil-can, and left it, bottom upward, in the capacious leg of the professor's remaining boot. I feigned a sound sleep. It was not until he had felt for a long time, on a table and in the locker, that he found the lamp. This, after much asthmatic expenditure of breath, he lighted, and took a deliberate survey of the cabin.

“*Je-rew-sa-lem,*” exclaimed he, as he partially opened the cabin-door. “How like all natur it does rain! Sleeps like a top, that ’ere feller!” (looking at me). “Darn that ’ere tarrier! Hello! *Hel-lo!* *HEL-LO!* Here’s a go now! What’s this ’ere in my bute? Lamp ile, by gravy! Childern of Isril! It’s eenamost half full. Wal, Fatty, I should like to know ef you don’t estimate that this ’ere’s rather a pleasant night on’t! Wal, keep your temper, Fatty. I guess you might ’bout as well lay down and git another nap.”

How I survived the convulsion of laughter with which my sides were aching, and how I restrained it, I know not. The professor, however, had not, apparently, discovered that I was awake. He left the lamp burning, stretched his brawny limbs beside me, and was soon asleep. He had left the cabin-door ajar, and presently a goodly stream of water trickled down beneath him;

while, from a new leak overhead, the big drops began to fall upon his heaving breast.

The night had become cold, and I suppose I ought, in all charity, to have awakened him. I am ashamed to confess, however, that I beheld the descending current with a feeling something very closely akin to satisfaction. Fatigue and drowsiness at last carried the day. The lamp burned dimly; the fire went out, my eyelids drew drowsily together, my head sank back; "the deep, profound, eternal bass" of the professor's snore fell upon unheeding ears. In vain did Captain Ragsdale startle the dull ear of night (who call's it so?) with the nerve-palsying blast of a tin horn, by way of warning to the lock-keepers. In vain did the rain patter, and trickle, and drop, as if discomfort had dissolved herself, in order to be omnipresent. I slept. How long, I know not. I remember faintly, as if it were all a dream, some low mutterings at my side. When I was fully awake, I saw by the expiring flicker of the lamp that the professor was sitting up in that precise position somewhat vaguely described by the words "on end."

"Childern of Isril!" now reached my ear, in a low mutter, like distant thunder, "they ain't a dry rag on me, I du believe. Ugh-h-h-h! By the great horn spoon! how cold it is! Feet wet, tew! Blast the old sieve of a boat! Ef I ever git aboard a canawl boat again, may I—howsomever, Fatty, keep yer temper. They're pumpin' the old thing now. Wonder if they're goin' to pump her all night! Shouldn't be surprised ef she'd sprung a leak. Ugh-h! Je—rew—slum, how cold I be! I say, friend!"

I made no reply.

"I say, neighbor. *Yaou!*"

"Eh? Hello! What is it?" said I, drowsily.

"What is it, indeed? It's a young delugè, sartin. Did you ever *see* sich a rain?"

"Well, it really *has* been raining, professor," said I, in the quietest way in life; "we must have had quite a shower."

"A shaower! a FLOOD, you mean. Look a here! Look at my shirt and weskit! (vest.) Jest look at my trowsis, will ye? Look at that 'ere bute! I shouldn't wonder ef my *hat* was wet."

He pricked up the wick of the lamp, and, in its momentary gleam, the venerable beaver was found with about a pint of water in it, resting as coolly and quietly as if it belonged there. The professor was not long, as may be readily supposed, in emptying the hat, and then he threw it down upon the cabin floor, with a wrathful vigor that I shall never forget.

"Cuss the rotten old thing! It eenamost makes me swear. I wonder what time it is?"

"Half-past two, professor."

"Half-past *tew*. I wish it was six. I——"

The professor's eloquence was here cut short by the arrival of Captain Ragsdale, who informed us that, if we would put up with such accommodations, (!) we might go into the hold. A part of it was dry, he said, and we could sleep there better than in the cabin.

"No doubt on't!" responded the professor.

We carried our bedding into the hold, and, to our infinite delight, slept uninterruptedly until seven o'clock.

We found ourselves at South End. We were not long in locking through. The poles were now taken in hand, and we were, at an early hour, winding along the countless turfs of the Pasquotank. We were so fortunate as to be able to lay our course into Albemarle Sound, and, just at nightfall, we let go our anchor abreast of the pretty village of Edenton. I now flattered myself that I should escape the professor. I took leave of him, and evaded his questions as to my destination. On reaching the hotel, I learned that it was court week; and the obliging landlord was pleased to say that he had but a single vacant room; but that *that* was at my service. He *might* be obliged, he added, to give me a fellow-lodger; but would not do so, if he could avoid it.

I then made some inquiries about my uncle's family. He knew Colonel Smallwood very well, he said; and would send me across the Chowan in the morning.

"Could he send me early?" I asked.

"As early as you please."

"Say, at four."

"At four."

"Will you breakfast here?"

"A mere lunch, if you please; toast and coffee."

"Good night, Mr. Seaworthy."

"Good night, Mr. Bond."

I may have been abed an hour. I was just falling, at any rate, into a delightful sleep, when a tap at my door awoke me.

"Who is there?"

"Open the door one moment, if you please, Mr. Seaworthy."

I did so. Mine host, for it was he, apologized for disturbing me ; but said that he was full, and that they were full at Hathaway's ; and that he was, therefore, obliged to ask me to take a bedfellow.

"Was it a gentleman of his acquaintance?" I asked.

"No. A stranger."

"And you have no other bed?"

"Not a bed in the house but what has at least two in it."

"Well, then, it is but for a night. I consent."

Mine host disappeared. A servant soon afterward made his appearance with a venerable trunk which I thought I must have met before, in my travels ; and while I was endeavoring to decide the query where it could have been, I heard the step of the owner in the passage. I first saw the top of a white hat (not, as it seemed from a hasty glance, in the best possible state of preservation), as the new-comer stooped to enter the low door. The head was then lifted erectly, and a loud

"HEL-lo! why, how DU you DU?" was a whole book of revelation as to the name of my bed-fellow.

"Why, what's the matter? sick?"

"Yes ; I *am* somewhat indisposed."

"I'm trewly sorry ; anything I kin *dew* for ye?"

"No ; I thank you."

"When du yaou git away?"

"It is uncertain."

I now called the servant to me, and asked him to wake me at three. He promised to be punctual, and left us.

"I hope I shan't disturb ye," said the professor, as he drew off his boots. I've ordered a bucket o' hot water. Don't feel very well myself ; and so I thought I'd

soak my feet. That's a nice trunk o' yours. Where'd ye git it?"

"I really do not remember."

"It must ha' cost ten or twelve dollars."

"I think it more than likely. Excuse me, if you please, professor; I am sleepy. Good night!"

"Good night, Mr. Seawether! P'r'aps we'll run ag'in one 'nother ag'in, some time."

"I haven't a doubt of it!" I muttered, and I slept.

The boy called me at three. Dressing in all possible haste, and as silently as I could, I left the professor, as I verily believed, in the arms of sleep. After a hearty breakfast, I embarked. I followed the plan I had previously arranged. I landed at Plymouth; sent my trunk back by the boat to Col. Smallwood's; went to Windsor to transact some business; and, about four o'clock in the afternoon of the following day, set out, on horseback, for the CYPRESS SHORE, the residence of my uncle.

CHAPTER V.

"AULD ACQUAINTANCE."—THE ARRIVAL.

"My home! my home! my happy home!"

Song.

I HAD sent to Cypress Shore, together with my trunk, a note to my uncle, Col. John Smallwood, apprising him of my arrival, and requesting him to send a horse for me, to Windsor, on the following day. The reader who happens to know the geography of the region of which I am speaking, will perceive that I passed very near (in sight of it, indeed) my uncle's house; for it is not two hundred yards from the head of the sound, between the mouths of the Roanoke and the Chowan. It will quite as easily be seen that I went leagues out of my way. In making this detour, I had several objects in view. One was to avoid my new friend the professor; another, to visit an old friend, Dr. Jeffreys, of whose change of residence I had not heard; and another to execute a commission for a New York merchant to his factor in Bertie.

Not finding Dr. Jeffreys at home (he had recently removed to a plantation near my uncle's, known as "Underwood"), I went directly to Windsor, where I arrived about ten o'clock on the same evening. I have known the time to pass "on angel-wings" there; but the earlier hours of the next day seemed interminable. My horse

arrived, at length, and I was speedily in the saddle. With many a silent query as to the possible changes at Cypress Shore (I had been gone three years), and whether Helen Jeffreys was single; and with now and then a laugh at my escape from my friend the professor (which degenerated into a chuckle of exultation when I imagined the surprise with which he would probably awake, and, on finding me absent, exclaim "Hewman natur!") did I steadily travel onward.

In winter, spring, or fall, which is to say in rainy seasons, it is a good three-hours' drive from Windsor to my uncle's residence. Such was the case at the time of which I speak, the twenty-ninth day of March, 1849; and my horse gave some signs of weariness as he "padded the way" in the silent shades and utter loneliness of the giant pines.

O! those Carolina roads! extending leagues on leagues, with never a crook discernible by the eye, flanked by thick-set pines that have been blazed and scarred by surveyors and tar-makers; level as a house floor, and sometimes as hard; musical at times with the hunter's horn, the hounds in full cry, or the notes of a thousand birds, thrown into fine harmonic relief by the low bass of the wind as it sweeps through the lofty pines. O! those Carolina roads! Will any one whose eye shall dwell on this page remember a gallop along their shadowy track, or through the bridle-paths and wood-roads, wherein no Mentor could have saved the bewitched Tele-machus? Will any heart, I wonder, feel a throb the quicker or more pleasant at this mention of the stillness, and solitude, and deep shadows of those finest of the world's pathways? "They are always melancholy

pleasures, those of memory," saith James ; " for they are the rays of a star that has set." Even so. There are few things that waken for me more pleasant, and by'r lady! sadder recollections, than the remembrance of divers walks and rides (not to make the remotest allusion to the person or persons—isn't that lawyer-like?—with whom they were enjoyed) through the magnificent pine-forests of " the good old North State."

I am digressing. I rode but slowly, and it was near nightfall when I reached the post-office, which, I remembered, was about six miles from Colonel Smallwood's. I had passed it, and had just entered the woods again, when I heard the clatter of a cart behind me, and the sharp and somewhat urgent chirruping of the driver. Whoever he was, he was manifestly in a hurry ; for I heard now and then a whack of a stout whip somewhat vigorously, not to say devoutly, administered. Thinking it not quite civil to turn my head to witness the approach of the new-comer, I reined my horse out of the road, and made him slacken his pace for the stranger to pass. On he came with a clatter that made my horse somewhat restive, and, as he rode up abreast of me, my ears were greeted with

" Human natur ! Is this yaou ?"

" I am laboring under the impression that it *is*," I replied, as coolly as I could say the words.

" Wall, ya-as ! I thought it must be yaou ; eenamost know'd 'twas yaou. How've you been ?"

" Pretty well, I thank you ; I hope you are quite well."

" Why ya-as, reasonable, I thank ye ; though I had an awful time out to Edentown with the bowel-complaint."

"I am sorry to hear it," I replied; though, forgive me, gentle reader! I wished it had been the cholera. "Good evening, sir; it's getting late, and I must ride on."

So saying, I plied my horse with a touch of the spur that nearly cost me my seat, and left my friend the professor at a round gallop. I had ridden possibly a mile at the same rate, when, on reaching the brow of a small hill, I saw my uncle's carriage and grays, and, on a nearer approach, old GRIEF, the coachman.

"Ki! Maussa Greg'ry, for sure!" exclaimed he, as he removed his hat, and gave his knee a curious slap with it.

The colonel's gray head and rosy visage now issued from one door of the carriage, and a bonnet that I was sure I had seen three years before, and which, even then, I considered a venerable relic, betokened the presence of the colonel's maiden sister, my aunt Corny, at the other.

"How you ben, Maussa Greg'ry?" roared Grief.

"Hello! Gregory, my boy! how are you? Glad to see you. Hold up, Grief! where the devil are you driving to?" shouted the colonel.

"Why bless me, Gregory! Why don't you hold the horses, Grief! I do believe they're going to run away! I'm so glad to see you, Gregory! Why didn't you write? Come this side; Molly's dying to see you."

Then followed a general and particular shaking of hands, with the more affectionate greetings to my Aunt Corny and little Molly Smallwood; this last being a curly-headed, rosy-cheeked, bewitching, mischievous, frolicking girl, and an adopted daughter of my uncle.

"Let Andrew ride your horse," said the colonel.
"Get into the carriage with us."

And Andrew came from his post behind the carriage. He took my horse, and I seated myself beside my Aunt Corny, with Molly on my knee.

"Drive home, Grief," said my uncle.

Grief had driven out of the road for the purpose of turning, and the carriage was standing crosswise in the road, when, at a short distance, I saw Professor Mathers standing upright in his cart, and endeavoring, apparently, to restrain a rickety old skeleton of a horse, then smitten with the marasmus. He had, by some means, persuaded the animal into a gallop.

"Whoa! hold on, yaou darned fool! I do b'lieve yaou'll run intew that 'ere carriage, spite of all I kin dew. Childern of Is——"

This last exclamation was cut short, as, apparently, in utter despair, he reined the horse into the ditch by the roadside. Whether such were his design, I know not. He was leaning back, at an angle of forty-five degrees, in the apparent effort to stop the horse; and when the wheel ran into the ditch the cart upset, and the professor leaped from it with an agility which surprised me. He fell headlong, however. We got out of the carriage, and as we approached him, he had one knee tightly against his breast, and his arms around it in a frantic hug.

"O-h-h-h!" groaned the professor.

"Are you much hurt?" asked the colonel.

"Oh-h-h! human natur!" was the sole reply, with a moan that would have justified the administration of

extreme unction, and which brought my Aunt Corny, trembling like a leaf, from the carriage.

"I do believe he—he—he is killed!" she exclaimed, gasping for breath. "Andrew, hitch your horse. Molly, my dear, run to the carriage, and get the mug for Andrew, and let him fill it with water. Here, my good man, smell this!" and she applied a phial of harts-horn to the professor's nostril.

"Childern of Isril!" roared the injured man; and he leaped to his feet. "Thanky, ma'am; I feel quite relieved. Oh-h-h!" (Here was another groan.) "Will yew let that 'ere darky help me git my cart int' the road?"

"Most certainly," answered the colonel, whose sympathies were somewhat excited; "and, as it is now sunset, you had better drive home with me, and take a bed."

"Thank ye, kindly!" groaned the professor; "but I'm on my way to Colonel Smalley's, or Smallwood's, I b'lieve it is. Kin yaou tell me where 'bouts he ties up tew, Mr. Seaworthy?"

"So! you're acquainted, eh?" said the colonel. "Come—the boys have got your cart into the road, I see. My name is Smallwood, and I am probably the person you wish to see."

The professor accepted the invitation. We reseated ourselves in the carriage, while he mounted his cart; and in less than an hour we were seated by a cheerful fire at the old family mansion. I wish I could present to the reader the scene of that evening, as it now reappears to me. The gray-haired colonel in his huge old-fashioned arm-chair; his rosy visage yet more rosy with the light

and heat of the genial fire; his benevolent smile betokening the temporary subjugation of his constitutional irritability. He was the ideal of your testy, choleric, impatient, yet benevolent, warm-hearted, hospitable Southern gentleman of three score. My Aunt Corny, who admitted to me in confidence, three years before, that she was "a little upwards of thirty" (the colonel declared she was forty-five), relaxed somewhat her habitual primness as she conversed with me, casting now and then a somewhat timid, uneasy, inquiring glance at the professor, and knitting away with a spasmodic activity that provoked then, as the recollection of it does now, an irresistible smile.

"You are always busy, I believe, Aunt Corny," I said to her, in one of the pauses of the conversation.

"O yes, Gregory. Since Kate has gone away to school, and Bob to college, I have taken to knitting as a pastime. Indeed, I don't know what I should do without it. Polly Feggins—you remember Polly, don't you?—proves to be such a capital housekeeper, that there is little or nothing else to do."

"What college is yer son gone tu?" inquired the professor.

"Not my son, sir; Robert Smallwood is my nephew. He is at——"

"O ya-as! 'Scuse me, ma'am; I remember now. Yew're a sister of the colonel's?"

"Yes, sir," replied Aunt Corny, nervously.

"What college did you say?"

"I was about to say that he was at Brown University."

"And where's Miss—Kate, I think yew called her? She's your niece, I s'pose?"

"Yes, sir; Miss Kate Smallwood is my niece," replied my aunt, a little irritated by so many questions from a stranger; "she is an adopted daughter of my brother, Colonel Smallwood. She is at school at Richmond, sir."

"Oho!" replied the professor, and he relapsed into something very like a brown study. (Does anybody know, by the by, why it came to be called a *brown* study?) He had probably made up his mind to comply very literally with the colonel's request that he would "consider himself at home;" for he drew his chair nearer the fire, pulled off his boots, and thrust his feet far inside the fender, within a very dangerous proximity to the fire. He then managed, how I know not, to coax Molly to his side, and then to seat her upon his knee, pouring forth, meanwhile, whole encyclopedias of nursery rhymes, which kept her in high glee until bedtime. I could see that my Aunt Corny's heart was warming towards the awkward and uncouth but kind-hearted professor; and I was well nigh ready, on my own part, to forgive the burr-like tenacity with which he had clung to me. Grief, I could see, was delighted with him, even while he grinned at his oddities; and the old colonel's face expanded into a genial smile, far beyond the strict limits of etiquette, as little Molly pulled forth from the professor's vest pocket a huge old-fashioned watch, so big that she could scarcely grasp it with both hands.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, suddenly; "childern of Isril, ef it ain't ten o'clock! Colonel Smally, ef yew please, I'll go to bed."

Grief was instantly at hand with a pair of slippers. The professor bade us good night; Molly soon disappeared; and then four long hours did we chat about the past.

Many a scene of the sea did we linger over, many a mile of my wanderings did I retrace; and it was not until my uncle snored in the midst of one of my most interesting stories, that I begged my better listener, Aunt Corny, to defer the rest until another day. A most grateful feeling of rest, and home, and familiar faces, gave me a delicious sinking away into the world of dreams. I was again in my own chamber; my own books were upon the well-remembered shelves; my own dusky valet smiled drowsily his heartiest smile; my little fire sung, and fished, and whined; old Ponto gazed earnestly at me from his resting-place on the rug; the crickets were in full orchestral furor, and I sank to rest with "O! my home, Brave old Cypress Shore! Peace be within thy walls!" as my last conscious benediction.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OLD FIELD—THE OLD HOUSE.

"Thus will we begin the pastoral life."

DON QUIXOTE.

"I SWEAR," said Sancho Panza, and he might have said the same *without* swearing, "I think the world is everywhere the same." But the sanguine squire, it will be remembered, was untraveled. There is no record that he ever left the chimney-corner before his marriage; and Donna Teresa Panza first awoke and missed his conjugal presence on the first night of his world-renowned pilgrimage. With many grains of allowance, therefore, O shade of the squire of squires! do I repeat thy immortal words; much, I confess, in thy own spirit, but nevertheless "so as with a difference." Else why have the terms "haughty Southron" and "weasel Scot" been bandied across the Tweed? Why else have "La Belle France" and "Le Diable Angleterre" played fisticuffs across the Strait of Dover? Why else the epithet "proud" for the Spaniard and "passionate" for the Italian? Why else swells the world of words, as the sands of the sea for multitude, with these latter-day additions of Blue-Nose, Yankee, Sucker, Hoosier, Buckeye, Wolverine—what not?

"Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds,
But Harry Harry;"

said the new-made king Henry V.

"No, Sancho," thought I, as I came down the next morning, "the world is *not* everywhere the same; and you yourself would not have said so on a second knight-errant pilgrimage. And, as if to confirm my remark, the voice of Professor Matters, in no very gentle tones, saluted my ear.

"Git a-o-u-t! Don't ye s'pose I kin put on my own clothes? Same thing, a'most, yew tried to dew last night. Jest as if a man couldn't pull off his own trow-sis! Who told ye to come here?"

"Maussa John."

"Who's maussy John?"

"De colonel, maussa."

"What in the name o' human natur du ye call me maussy for? I ain't nobody's master."

"Yes, maussa."

"There it is ag'in. Yew kin leave these diggins."

"Yes, maussa."

"Wal, why don't ye go? Clear out. I guess I kin dress myself. What's yer name?"

"Name Grief, maussa."

"Name *what*?"

"Name Grief."

"Git aout! yew're jokin! What's yer name, anyhow?"

"Name GRIEF, maussa."

"Wal, yew kin take my hat."

Here there was a short pause.

"No, no! yew consuméd fool! I don't want it *brushed*. Yew're gittin' all the nap off on't. Yew kin go. I'm *threw* with ye this time. I al'ays wait on myself to

hum; and I don't want nobody to wait on me *away* from hum. I'm a free and independent citizen of Steventown, State of Maine."

"I al'ays waits on de gemmen, maussa."

"Childern of Isril! can't you take a hint, yew darned nigger! Make yourself scarce now, or I'll make you think the eend o' the world's comin'. Ef I don't I hope I may die!"

Here Grief evidently became alarmed; for I heard his step at the head of the stairs. As he passed me, a moment afterward, his mouth displayed its whole inventory of interior decoration, as he said

"Ki! ben gwine 'stracted, sure's you bawn!"

As I have already intimated, I had not seen Cypress Shore for about three years. My uncle had given me repeated invitations to make my permanent home there. For reasons which would be of no possible interest to the reader, I had declined; but I had, until my last voyage, paid him a regular annual Christmas visit. Having some curiosity to see what changes might have taken place, I called old Ponto from his kennel, and ordered old Peter to saddle a horse for me. He had not forgotten my preference, it seemed; for the horse he led to the rack was none other than brave old Hampton—one of a thousand among horses. He was a large and beautifully formed horse; coal-black, spirited; worshiped by all the negroes, who declared unanimously that "he knowed a heap." I mounted and rode towards the fishery. This, I may remark, in passing, is about midway between the mouths of the Roanoke and Chowan, than which there are none more beautiful rivers in the whole South. It was a most delightful morning. At intervals, between

the pines and cypresses on the shore, I could see the sound. There was not a ripple on its broad surface, and it looked like a golden sea, in the gorgeous flush that overspread its face at the first fierce glance of the "the old day-wearied sun." The air was musical with birds; a jolly negro was making the woods ring with a quaint song; a distant pack of hounds were in full cry; and anon came the fresh breeze from

"Old ocean's gray and melancholy waste,"

to stir my blood with the pulse of boyhood. Old Hampton snuffed it too; or was it the long-drawn cry of the hounds that provoked him into a friskiness and jollity, unworthy his years?

The scene recalled to me many a pleasant recollection of my former visit; and I more than half resolved to accept my uncle's long-sighted invitation to make my home with him.

"O! the South! the South! the beautiful South!" I exclaimed aloud, as I rode along; and Old Hampton hung his head, threw back his ears, dropped into a drowsy amble, and at length put an end to my reverie by a very inconsiderate start at some imaginary danger on the shore of the sound. Its shores were already a scene of bustle. The fishermen were out in their batteaux, and the mules were in motion at the first windlass.

Behind me was "The Old Field." The Old Field! I like the phrase. The scene of toil, in years long gone by. The moss has grown over the record,

"Trimly set forth in lapidary lines,"

which tells us of those long-buried tillers of its broad

wealth-yielding acres. What volumes of recollections slumber in the very name!—of the stalwart rovers of the tall old woods, ere yet the axe had rung its merry peal; of strife to the death which followed the white man's arrival; of those later days of terror, when the men of seventy-six left

“ —— the ploughshare in the mold,
 Their flocks and herds without a fold;
 The sickle in the unshorn grain,
 The corn half-garnered on the plain.”

• • • • •

“ The bugle's wild and warlike blast
 Shall muster them no more;
 An army now might thunder past,
 And they not heed its roar.”

Here toil has plodded. Here avarice has hoarded its shining stores. Peril, by flood and field, has here quickened the warrior's pulse, or blanched the cheek of woman. Love has here had its altars. Bereavement has here written her chapters of lamentations. Ambition has had her votaries; Religion hath wakened the voice of Prayer and Worship; obscure heroism hath fulfilled its mission; youth has gamboled in the shades of overhanging trees, and age has been gathered to the mighty congregation of the dead.

My reverie was again disturbed by the braying of the hounds. Old Hampton raised his fine head, and bounded away. The whole pack was soon visible. Several gentlemen were galloping behind them; and in a few minutes I was side by side with the hunters, among whom I met with hasty but right hearty greeting from old friends whom I had last met at my uncle's table. We were in

at the death. Engagements for days to come were made, and I turned homeward. I paused a moment at the gate for a view at the old family mansion. The northern front is not nearly so attractive as the southern. The trees which had been recently planted, at my last visit, were now finely grown; and it was evident that another month would make the spacious lawn one of the most beautiful spots in the world. The house was large, painted white, and furnished with dark-green shutters. Huge chimneys were built at both ends outside the house; and, on the northern side, a broad piazza, supported by half a score of columns, extended along the whole length. A hospitable deal bench ran along the weather-boarding; and at one end of the piazza was a sort of shelf attached to the balustrade, on which a neat unpainted bucket, with shining hoops and bail of brass, was always standing. In a hole of this same shelf, fitted for the purpose, was the ewer; and near this, on a roller, was a towel white as the snow. Through the centre of the building ran a hall, some ten or twelve feet in width. I may be permitted to say here, for the benefit of my northern reader, who may not have seen the south, that, for three-fourths of the year, the hall and the porch of a southern mansion are in constant requisition. You sit, lounge, or take your siesta in either. Both, but more commonly the piazza, serve you for your promenade. In the hall you very frequently see the appliances for sporting—guns, belts, pouches, horns—while on the walls you will perhaps see engravings of celebrated horses. In the piazza, the dogs consider themselves privileged; and even the hounds sometimes

intrude. The youngsters romp there; and there the hobby-horse performs his untiring gallop.

Bless me, what a long paragraph of the descriptive! As I dismounted, I saw Professor Matters in earnest conversation with my uncle. They were coming from the Lot. This is the name, by the by, given to the inclosure, surrounded usually by the sheds and stables, where the horses, mules, sheep, and cows are gathered at night. The professor had his hat in his right hand, and had, apparently, the weather-gage of the colonel, who walked slowly along with the abstracted and somewhat irritable air of a man who is very reluctantly being convinced of what he considered, at best, a somewhat doubtful proposition. I gave little heed to the matter at the time; and I only mention it here by way of preparing the reader for subsequent developments in my story.

Little Molly and my Aunt Corny met us as we ascended the steps of the piazza. Grief announced breakfast, with his profoundest bow, and we gathered around the table. My Aunt Corny, I discovered, had persuaded the colonel into the custom of saying grace, a fact that surprised me a little, inasmuch as I knew that nothing could restrain his expletives when he was in a testy humor. It so happened that, as we approached the table, the professor was conversing with me. When the colonel bowed his head, and began saying the customary words, Professor Matters took it for granted that the remark, whatever it might be, was addressed to himself. Turning so hastily around that he did not perceive my uncle's devotional posture, he said, abruptly—

“What'd yaou observe, colonel?”

“D—n it, sir, I was saying grace!”

Aunt Corny was horrified ; the professor looked penitent ; little Molly was mystified ; and, for myself, I was nigh joining the colonel in his boisterous roar of laughter at the comic mingling of the devout and the profane. Conversation, however, soon took its usual quiet vein, and the mishap was forgotten.

"If your business will admit of it," said my uncle, addressing the professor, "I shall be happy to have you spend a few days with us."

"Thank ye, squire, or, I believe, they call you colonel ; I'm very much obleeged tew ye for the invitation. Guess I'll stay ; for I've al'ays wanted to know somethin' 'bout this 'ere southern country."

"I am right glad to hear you say so," replied the colonel ; "and we shall take a great deal of pleasure in doing what we can to make your stay agreeable. I impose but one condition, which is that you make yourself at home. There are the guns, powder, and shot in the hall ; the fishing-gear hangs in the carriage house ; Grief will bring you a pointer or setter ; or a horse, if you care to ride. If it be agreeable to you, I propose to take you to the fishery this morning."

"Yew couldn't suit me better."

"Well, then, Grief, order the horses. Saddle Broom-straw for Professor Matters."

And Grief disappeared.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FISHERY.

"There is no death; what *seems* so is transition."

LONGFELLOW.

"Merrily, when we reach the shore,

A can we'll drain to the lads of the oar."

REGATTA SONG.

THE first of my quotations at the head of this chapter may seem very much out of place, for what has death to do with the shad and herring fishery? Sure enough! But has it not something to do therewith? Are there not hundreds who, like myself, have had the death-struggle of the game mar, a morning's sport? True, one's sensibilities become obtuse by the wholesale destruction of life in a haul of fifty thousand herrings; but then I can never forget that there may be in fish even something of that intense love of life which is so remarkable in men.

To return to my quotation. Very few lines of Longfellow's golden thousands have afforded me so much consolation as that same. I have never excelled in the use of rifles, double-barrels, and fishing gear, simply because (do not laugh at me) I could never see a perch or a partridge, a bat or a bass, a pike or a pullet, in "the agony," without much the same spirit of lamentation which Jacques manifested in the forest. I never had a morning's sport which did not reproach me that I had

attempted at least to rob the Creator's tenantry of their rightful lease of life. I invariably rescue a fly when I see one drowning; though, to say the truth, I am less merciful to them in the mass, and on sultry mornings in the dog-days. I rarely strike a horse. I have a horror of chaining a dog. I would have all creatures live, be free, and be happy; not excepting snakes even, if they will keep out of my way. The reader may imagine, then, with what a feeling of relief I first read the words

"There is no death; what seems so is transition."

For, questionless, a transition from perils of shark and perils of hooks, from perils of dogs and perils of guns, from perils by land and perils by sea, from perils of nets and perils of spears, to a state of comparative certainty, if not of safety, free from any the slightest element of fear or suspense, is, I take it (admitting the poetical premise), very decidedly a kindness to fish, flesh, and fowl.

In some new phase of existence, they may chance to become elements in the eye or lip or brow of beauty; or, in coarser combination,

"Sip with nymphs their elemental tea."

They may be transfused into the composition of heroes, sages—what not?—who shall rank with Plato, or Shakespeare, or Wellington, or Washington; or, perchance, it may be reserved for them, in some of those less essential forms of existence, now, alas! well-nigh forgotten, to roam through the air,

"The light militia of the lower sky."

Therefore, hear, O fish! and repine not at your manifest destiny. You are whirling along the lines of latter-

day progress. There's a good time coming for you ; a time when the social condition of your race shall be perfected. All fish are born free and equal. The shrimp shall be as big as the whale. The dolphin shall no more be oppressed by the shark ; nor the flying-fish by the dolphin. Nets, hooks, and spears, lances and harpoons shall be heard of no more forever. Be patient. Some minnow now living may live to see the dawn of that day, and the birth and christening of that perfect social condition, so long looked and battled for, and, apparently, so distant still. The conclusion, then, of the whole matter, is that your Nimrod and your Walton are benefactors of the animal kingdom, and that all scruples may be banished as to the propriety of sporting and fishing. *Quod erat demonstrandum !*

The horses were soon saddled. I saw, in the nervous preparation of the professor, that he was not much accustomed, if at all, to the saddle ; and was thus somewhat prepared for the over-vigorous spring which he made in mounting, and which carried him entirely over the horse. A second effort was successful, and off we went. Broom-straw, by the by, was a fine hunter ; a strong, square-set, and very spirited horse, on which a man might find it amusement to charge a battery. I knew very well that he was occasionally "frisky," especially if he happened to hear the hounds ; and I was somewhat surprised that the colonel had ordered him for our guest. In the South, however, it is taken for granted that everybody can ride ; and it had not, probably, occurred to my uncle that the professor might be less accustomed than himself to the saddle. I once thought of exchanging horses with my uneasy neighbor ; but it was a delicate matter to broach ;

and, besides, I remember that old Hampton had a way of taking the bit in his teeth that was not very convenient for an unskilled rider; and I knew that should he take a fancy to do so, on that particular occasion, he would give the professor a John Gilpin excursion over the whole plantation. Besides I noticed that my friend sat tolerably well in the saddle, and I thought Broomstraw was disposed to heed the insinuating tones in which the professor said to him, patting his arched neck the while,

“Stiddy, boy! wha—a—a! none o’ yer highferlutin’ now! There, jest walk naow, you darned fool!”

The colonel saw the professor’s uneasiness, and we both reined in. The three horses then went quietly along at a slow walk.

“How big is this ’ere farm o’ your’n?” asked the professor, as he looked over an immense cotton-patch.

“I have about ten thousand acres.”

“Wh—e—w! Git aout! Yew’re jokin’!”

“Do you consider that a large farm in Maine?”

“Ondoubtedly. Deacon Weskit’s farm, down to Kennebeck, is the biggest in them parts, and that ’ere is only ’leven hundred acres.”

“We call ourselves small farmers.”

“Wal, you kin take my hat! What do you raise along here?”

“Cotton.”

“Is them ’ere little sprabouts cotton?”

“Yes.”

“How much dew yew raise to the acre?”

“A bale.”

“And how much does a bale fetch?”

"From twenty-five to forty-five dollars; about forty dollars now."

"How much dew yew raise?"

"About a hundred bales."

"Wal, I consider that pretty tall farmin'. Of course, yaou raise a power o' corn?"

"About ten thousand barrels."

"Ten thousand *barrels*?"

"Yes."

"Sho! Why, that ere's 'bout fifty thousan' bushels! How many hands—how many niggers does it take?"

"I have something like two hundred and fifty."

In a similar strain of question and reply did the professor and my uncle continue until our arrival at the fishery; the one meeting with novelty at every step, and intent upon knowing all that questions could elicit; the other happy to reply; and, to say the truth, a little flattered by the open wonderment excited by the details of the extent, resources, expenditures, crops, and cultivation of a large plantation.

We halted on the shore. It rises abruptly to the height of perhaps twenty feet, leaving a beach of a few yards in breadth, on which the fishermen haul in the seine. It will be seen, then, that we could overlook the whole fishery.

Directly beneath us was the house, to which, until that year, the colonel had regularly removed his family, and in which he had been accustomed to reside some six or eight weeks every spring. It was of goodly dimensions; and it was nothing unusual for the colonel to have half a score of guests, who were wont thus to pay their respects to him—and the shad. Flanking the *house were some twenty cabins* for the use of the fisher-

men. At intervals along the beach were eight stout windlasses, used for hauling in the seine. They were turned by mules. The seine was about twenty-two hundred yards in length ; and the warp was so adjusted, by cringles, as to gather "the haul" into a few yards of the centre, so that the part of the beach on which the fish were landed was but about fifteen or twenty yards in length.

When we reached the shore, the warp was on the second windlass ; and, as it takes four hours to make a single haul, the reader will perceive that we had abundance of time to show the professor the lions of the fishing beach. The boys were riding on the windlasses, and lashing the mules into something akin to activity. Some of the men were getting their batteaux in readiness, while others (among them a few women) were cutting, cleansing, and salting down the fish. The cutting-bench was placed beneath a shed erected for the purpose ; and there were some hundreds of fine shad upon it.

We descended to the beach.

In conversation with the overseer, Mr. Barney O'Brien, whom we shall beg to introduce to the reader by and by, and who was then superintending the fishery, I met an old acquaintance, none other than Mr. John Butterton—Dr. Squire Butterton, to give him his usual title—a friend and crony of my uncle's, and his nearest neighbor. The professor, the overseer, and the squire were soon made acquainted ; and we seated ourselves to while away the time until the "landing" of the fish.

"What sort o' fish dew yaou ketch here ?" asked the professor.

"What sort o' fish is it?" replied Mr. Barney O'Brien, with a brogue that would have done honor to poor Power. "Av coorse we catches shad. Did any one iver hear of herring, batin' a hundther or two, before the tenth av April?"

"I s'pose them 'ere is shad."

"Av coorse; thim's shad! divil a less!"

"Haow many kin you ketch on an average?"

"At wan hahl is it?"

"Yes."

"Maybe tin thousan'!"

This, by the by, must be entitled to poetic license; for Barney was a man of somewhat largely developed imagination.

"Ten thousan'! Sho!"

"Thru as the tin commandhers!"

"Git aout!"

"Och! bother'shin! will I swear till it?"

"No, don't swear, Mr. Briney; I——"

"Misther O'Brien, av its agreeable!"

"Wal, then, Mr. O'Brien it is. When dew yaou begin tew ketch herrin'?"

"In a week, maybe."

"Wal, haow many o' them 'ere dew yew commonly ketch to a haul?"

"Sivinty-five thousan', honey!"

"Hay?"

"Sivinty-five thousan'; on the Vangelis'. Divil a less, honey."

"You seem somewhat surprised, Professor Matters," said the squire, who had been quietly taking the mental dimensions of the astonished and incredulous professor.

“Wal, ya-a-s, I am.”

“You are not accustomed to hear of such extensive results from our maritime fisheries?”

“Wal, not exactly. I have heerd o’ three hundered barrels of ile out of a right whale; but you kin take my hat on fishin’.”

“Three hundred barrels, did you say, Professor Matters?”

“Ya-a-s! That’s what I said, squire; but that ’ere was a young whale, a calf. They got forty-six barrels out of his head!”

“Professor Matters, you appear to——”

“Trew, I tell ye; trew as the ’Postles.”

“Three hundred barrels?”

“Ya-a-s; and they estimated that his mother’d a made nine hundered!”

“Professor Matters!” replied the squire, with a queer twinkle of his eyes, “you can retain your hat; and permit me to add that mine is at your service. Suppose you come down to the beach to-night?”

“Wal, I’m unanimous.”

“It is so understood, then,” said my uncle. “We meet here at eight this evening.”

We turned homewards. The squire mounted and rode up beside the professor.

“Do you propose to remain long with us, Professor Matters?” said he, with a low bow.

“Wal, no; not a great while.”

“Some few days, I trust?”

“Ya-a-s.”

“I hope, then, that you will honor me with a visit. You will find the *Intelligencer*, the *Patriot*, and *Enquirer*

at my house; and permit me to add that, as you are just from the North, I would be glad to converse with you on political matters. They are having a stormy session of it, I see."

"Wal, ya-a-s; so it 'pears to me. I'll come over, squire."

"So do, professor. I must bid you a good morning, colonel! Bring the professor, and my friend Seaworthy, and Miss Corny, and Molly, and dine with us to-morrow. Will you come?"

"With a great deal of pleasure, neighbor Butterton."

"Well, then, it is so arranged. I'll expect you at three. Good morning."

"Good morning, squire!" replied we in chorus; and we struck a brisk trot homewards.

It seemed that my sporting friends had not finished the chase, as I had supposed; for I heard the hounds at a distance, and observed with some uneasiness that Broomstraw was beginning to be fidgety.

"Wha-a-a! steady, I tell ye!" were the trembling words with which the professor broke ground. "Wha-a-a! yaou consarned fool! Wha-a-a! steady!" And he patted, coaxingly, the neck of the prancing gray. Meanwhile, the horse began a series of demonstrations which kept his rider in perspiration of pure terror. I offered to exchange horses with the professor.

"Thank ye," he replied. "I calkilate I kin ride anything in the shape of horseflesh." And he leaned far back in the saddle, braced both feet out in the stirrups, and gave a pull on Broomstraw's bit to which he was not accustomed, and to which he was determined not to submit. He reared suddenly, and the professor bent

hastily forward and grasped the mane. He then threw his feet out of the stirrups, evidently with the intention to throw himself from his saddle. Before he could do so, Broomstraw was in a fast gallop; and back to our ears, in faint and half-smothered tones, came the words "Wha-a-a! Je-rew-slum! Childern of Isril!"

Somewhat uneasy for the consequences, I left the colonel to ride home at his own pace, and, giving Hampton the spur, was soon in chase of the professor. As if chased by fiends did Broomstraw shape his course for the hounds; the professor clinging, with a drowning man's hug, to the mane; nor did the fiery gray pause until he joined a knot of fox-hunters, then in full chase and coming directly towards me. As they came up, the whole group were in a roar of laughter; in which I most heartily joined as I wheeled old Hampton into line. It was nearly a half hour ere we drew rein; and the panting gray then gave his rider a chance to dismount. He had no sooner done so than he seized the bridle-reins, near the bit, and, with a bearing on them that well nigh threw Broomstraw on his haunches exclaimed,

"Whoa, naow! will ye? Who'd yaou think was on ye? Yaou ain't no great shakes, nohaow!" And then, throwing his venerable hat furiously to the ground, he stamped as he shouted, "O, Jeems River! Scissors! Cuss it all tu next Jinnywary!"

Amidst occasional bursts of laughter, in which, to do him justice, the professor heartily joined, with a cackling rapidity of iteration on a deep-voiced "He! he! he!" which brought the tears to his eyes as he sunk wearily to the earth, I succeeded in presenting him to my friends. He was cordially invited to visit them all; and

after a few minutes' desultory chat we bade our friends good morning.

"Who was them 'ere?" asked the professor, when we had ridden out of hearing.

"First, there was Mr. Amos Sayles, the postmaster."

"Which was he?"

"The gentleman who——"

"That quiet-lookin' feller, yaou mean; all skin an' bones, as it were."

"Precisely. He is a merchant. His store is at Merry Hill, as is likewise the post-office."

"'Bout six miles back here?"

"Yes. We will ride up there on Saturday, if you are so inclined. We have but a semi-weekly mail, and Saturday is the next mail-day."

"Thank ye. I'd like to go. I'm expectin' a letter from hum. But who was that 'ere tall chap with the black eyes?"

"That is Mr. Archibald Buckthorn, a neighbor of ours. He has a son in the navy. His intimate friends, however, call him Uncle Baldy."

"Would it dew for me to call him so?"

"Hardly. He hates all Northerners as cordially as a Frenchman hates a Scot. He is a noted fire-eater, too, and——"

"What dew yaou mean by a fire-eater?"

"Oh! he's a great shot. Fights a duel now and then. The best shot in the State. Snuffs a candle at twelve paces. I would recommend you to be careful what you say in his presence."

"Wal, he's a savage-lookin' feller, that's sartin; but, friend Seaworthy, did you ever survey that 'ere?" And

he held out for my inspection a clenched fist that inspired me with some considerable respect for his physical strength. "That has never failed me yet; and I've lived to be thirty-eight—yes, goin' on thirty-nine year old. I rayther guess the postmaster's afeared of him."

"That is possible, certainly; for Mr. Sayles is a very quiet and somewhat nervous man. I was surprised to see him fox-hunting this morning; for he very seldom engages in any sport except fishing. He is a great devourer of newspapers, and at his store you will find him the politest man in the world."

"In course; he don't seem so set in his way as that 'ere Mr. Buckthorn."

"He is not. His reading, though something of a party nature, has rendered him liberal. Uncle Baldy seldom or never reads. He hunts, fishes, races, travels; he is always in motion. I need scarcely say to you that he is a man of very strong prejudices; and especially with regard to everything Northern."

"Who was the other man 'long with Mr. Buckthorn and the postmaster?"

"One of the most agreeable men in the world; my very particular friend, Dr. Jeffreys. He is quite a wag, and something of a musician. He tells a capital story, and is the most hospitable gentleman alive. I may add that Madam Jeffreys is a lady of whom the whole county is proud; and Miss Helen Jeffreys," I continued, with an effort to appear unconcerned, "is——"

"Oho!" exclaimed the professor, with a quizzical leer; "Oho! *that's* it, eh?"

"Yes, Professor Matters; *that's* it!" said I, a little nettled; "and now for a gallop to the gate."

Although I was in constant fear that the awkwardness of my companion would cost him a fall, he continued somehow to keep his seat. We reached home without accident. The professor engaged my uncle in a game of draughts, in which I observed that the latter was almost invariably successful, while I chatted with my Aunt Corny. Her primness of caps seemed primmer than ever that morning.

"By the by, Gregory," said she, suddenly, "I must show you Bob's letter." And she rummaged the drawer of her neatest of all work-tables. "This is what I get by giving Molly the key to my work-table. Everything in confusion. Where *is* it? What can have—Oh! these children! Here it is at last. There, read that."

I must beg Mr. Robert Smallwood's permission to show it to the reader.

• "BROWN UNIVERSITY, PROVIDENCE, R. I.,

"*March 20th, 1849.*

"MY DEAR AUNT CORNY:—Very few things in all the world could give me so much pleasure as the reception of your last letter. I say very few, for, as a matter of course; you will allow me three exceptions: *Videlicet*; *yes*, from one's sweetheart; the absolution of one's sins; and the fee simple of California. Do you know, by the by, that scores of ships and thousands of people are hurrying off to the gold mines? New Bedford, they say, is sending hundreds away; and Nantucket (how I wish I could take you to Nantucket) is almost deserted. I wonder these Yankees, in their ingenuity, don't set Nantucket afloat like a Peruvian catamaran. Why not? or

else make a balsa of elephant skins and blow them up with an east wind, and then navigate the 'dear native soil' (sand) to El Dorado?

"To return to your letter. I know not how to convey to you any idea how welcome it was, unless the skeleton words can receive some mesmeric energy from the heartiness with which I thank you. They tell us that 'words are things.' Be it so; but they are very *poor* things, to my thinking. True there are men and women (by the by, father tells me that Kate writes a charming letter, and I suppose I ought to write to her) who give them beauty, energy, eloquence—life; but, ordinarily, they are mere livery hacks that anybody can put through their customary paces. Give, then, my dear Aunt Corny, whatever emphasis it may make you the happier to give, to the assurance that I have not received so welcome a letter since I entered college. I am getting tired of college. It is such a bore to be knocked up at daybreak to prayers and recitation; and that, too, among these emotionless Yankees. The abolitionists coaxed old Gabe away from me, and, of course, father won't allow me another. The stupid old blockhead of a servant, whom we call our Professor of Dust and Ashes, and who may, therefore, be in some sort considered one of the corporation, is not worth a"—here there was some word erased—"straw; of no account, as we say at home. I shall send Priama home in a few weeks, and you may expect me soon after. I don't ride much now; and, besides, the pavements have made her very tender-footed. I've a notion they don't half take care of her at the stable.

"Spring is here. There is not a cloud to-day in all the sky. The air is 'frosty, but kindly,' and the much-

slandered weather lacks little of perfection. I would fain have a pair of the world-renowned seven-league boots that I might visit you. I said as much, just now, to my chum, and he asked if there were room enough in Lower Carolina, between the swamps, to put them on! (How little these people know about the South). I have a great respect for Aladdin, for—

‘I’m lanely, lanely, a’ the day’

now, and I envy his facility of traveling. The telegraph is nothing to it. Was there but one wonderful lamp? And is there none now in existence? Had I one, oh! how would I rub out of it an exemption from the fetters of space and time! I would set at liberty some slave of the lamp who has, perchance, lain

‘Wedged whole ages in a bodkin’s eye,’

and then, hey! presto! I would be seated so cozily by your side, with Molly (kiss her for me, won’t you?) on my knee, while we would chat, and laugh, and miserlily count over our hoards of pleasant memories.

“Well, it will not be long ere I shall see you all. Let me say in your ear, Aunt Córny (and hold it low, for father will not hear of it, I’m afraid), that I wish to go to California. Now do not try to dissuade me, for I am resolved to go. I will visit you all first, however, and possibly stay with you until autumn. Meanwhile, I have written enough if I have given you any idea of the affection and respect with which I am,

“Your student-nephew,

“ROBERT SMALLWOOD.

“P. S.—You are right. It has been a year and more

since I wrote to Kate. I will write and beg pardon. Remember me to all, distributing my missive hugs and kisses with due regard to the proprieties."

The professor and my uncle had finished their game, and the letter was laid aside. We dined, and, while the colonel was enjoying his pipe and siesta, the professor accompanied me in a walk along the shore of the sound.

In the evening we went to the fishing-beach. The torches were blazing, and the shores of the sound were gleaming, far and near, with similar lights. The cutting-bench had just been cleared of fish, and a group of negroes were gathered round Grief, who had brought his violin, and was then playing a merry old reel that infused into rheumatic limbs, and younger sinews, a genuine fever of excitement. Old Harry Hog, the swineherd, accompanied him with the banjo, while another clapped his hands in time. I undertake to say that Professor Matters never before saw heels and legs and toes in such vigorous, ecstatic, indiscriminate activity. At any rate, he said very emphatically that he had never seen the like "to Steventown," and that it "beat all natur."

Squire Butterton left us about nine o'clock; and, half an hour later, we also left the beach.

"I must say," said the professor, musingly, "that them's a merry set of niggers. Dew they fish Sundays?"

"Yes," replied the colonel; "but they have one dollar a-day for their labor on that day. They are supplied, too, with water-proof clothing, and are as comfortable as I can make them. I believe the whalemén fish on Sunday, don't they, professor?"

"Wal, yes; I b'lieve they dew."

CHAPTER VIII.

"HYDROLOGY;" A NEW SYSTEM.

"Faith! it's a pairt of me systim, sir!"

THE IRISH TUTOR.

I BELIEVE it was in the comedy of "The Irish Tutor" that I once saw the acting of a scene of which the above quotation is a part. As well as I remember, a gentleman advertises, or writes, for a private tutor. He is successful; engages the learned gentleman, and is in daily expectation of his arrival. On the eve of his departure, however, the tutor dies; and his Irish valet conceives the idea (nobody but an Irishman *could* have conceived it) of donning his master's clothes and wig, and going to supply the vacant tutorship. He arrives, mystifies his employer, and contrives to extricate himself from all his thousand blunders. As his evil stars would have it, however, he finds an old flame, some Biddy or Judy, under the same roof. Not knowing what precise temperature and application of blarney might be necessary to bribe her to silence, he kneels to her on one knee; half coaxes and half draws her upon the other; and is in the somewhat perilous process of a Kilkenny hug, when in comes the master of the house. The maid shrieks and vanishes; the employer storms; while the Irishman winks slyly at the old gentleman, over-

whelms him with a torrent of blarneyish explanation, and winds up by saying, "It's a pairt of me systim, sir!"

The drama-loving reader will pardon my thus recalling a familiar scene, for the sake of the new system, now about to be revealed to him, of HYDROLOGY. The reader has no doubt been wondering what it could be; but let me beg him to bear in mind that I was in a perfect fog of mystification up to the very morning of which I am about to speak. I had, moreover, been in a whirl of new scenes and odd experiences; now faint and aching with laughter; now vexed at the pertinacity, bordering upon the clinging sympathies of poor relations, with which the professor haunted me—"waking and in my dreams."

When I came down from my chamber the next morning, there was no one astir. I was awake much earlier than usual. I found a supply of fuel and light wood in the box, and was not long in building me a fire. Then, drawing my dressing-gown closely around me, and throwing a spare blanket over an old arm-chair, I sat down, and gazed upon the cheerful blaze with a keen sense of comfort which I have no words to describe. In a pile of musty old volumes on the table was the "Ingenuous Dreamer's—good old John Bunyan's—Divine Emblems; or Temporal Things Spiritualized; fitted for the use of Boys and Girls." It was dated so far back as 1808. I pored dreamily over it awhile, and then gave my eyes a holiday, by thinking of the Pilgrim's fortunes on his way to the Eternal City. Like his chamber, in the Mansion of the Good Interpreter, mine looked towards the sun-rising; and like his, too, at that hour, its name was Peace. I mused, I know not how long;

following him from the Slough of Despond to his meeting with Mr. Legality ; to his entrance into the Narrow Way ; his sojourn with Interpreter ; his losing of the burthen ; his temptations, battles, chains ; to the Dark Valley ; to the deep waters, more awful than the fabled voyage with "the grim Ferryman the poets write of ;" to the glittering City whose

" — gates are all of orient pearl,
Whose streets are paved with gold ;"

and beneath whose walls the hosts of Heaven, gathered rank on rank beneath the banner of the Cross, awaited and welcomed his coming. In dim and shadowy array I beheld them marshaled, silent, glittering, when, lo ! one long, loud shout, "The noise of wings like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty ; the voice of speech as the noise of a host." And so thoroughly real was the scene to me that I leaped to my feet, every vein tingling with excitement, the hot tears gushing to my eyes, as I exclaimed, "O ! shade of brave, heroic, lion-hearted, good, glorious old John Bunyan, peace to thee ! I bless thee ! Live forever !"

My reverie was broken. I threw open the shutters. The thin crescent of the waning moon was looking down upon the earth and sea, with an air of aristocratic coolness, and utter absence of all enthusiasm, eminently worthy of the first circles. Below her beamed the morning star with a flood of glorious light. Thin, mist-like clouds floated lazily here and there. The cocks began their fierce, shrill, pulse-stirring matins. My little fire burned drowsily, though musically and socially, with a low, kitten-like purr, while ever and anon it gave a short,

sharp, choleric snap, like a gouty alderman in an easy wind. My candle had burned low, well nigh to the socket; and its expiring flicker threw my shadow into huge, unshapely, ever-changing proportions upon the wall. A faint glow appeared in the horizon. A long streak of bright sky succeeded it. The clouds flushed into the semblance of magic isles of a golden sea; the glittering rays fell in a flood of glorious light upon land and sea; and I rose to my feet, and welcomed the sun-rising.

As I have already said, there was no one stirring except the servants when I left my chamber. Blind old Alice, the greyhound, met me as I took my hat from the hall-table, and followed me in my walk along the shore. I walked well nigh to the mouth of the Cashie. The sun was far up in the sky when I returned; and I remember thinking, as I climbed up the bank, how keenly I should relish my uncle's substantial breakfast.

I believe I have not yet mentioned the fact that my uncle's mansion had a large basement. This was divided into various apartments. One of these was Bob's study, or sanctum, to give it his own appellation. Another was appropriated to Old Penny (Penelope), the laundress; and still another was used as a store-room. The piazza was sufficiently high for a person of ordinary stature to walk erectly underneath it.

As I approached the house, I saw a group standing near the door of the laundry. The colonel was standing beside my plain-looking Aunt Corny, while a little in front of them stood Professor Matters, apparently giving directions to two stout negroes, who were making quite a large excavation (some forty or fifty square feet possi-

bly) in the earth. As I approached still nearer, I saw the professor stoop low down, in the act of giving directions. I was about to ask Aunt Corny, in whose face I saw the unmistakable indications of a forthcoming volume of explanation, the meaning of it all, when I was very suddenly and most unexpectedly interrupted.

My uncle, it seems, had recently purchased of a Vermont wool-grower, through his agent in New York, a large Merino ram, and several ewes. As I afterwards learned, they had taken the premium at the State Agricultural Fair, as they passed through New York. The silver cup, I may add, in passing, still decorates the parlor mantelpiece in my uncle's house. It appears, moreover, that the colonel had petted the sheep out of all reasonable bounds. He fed them, salted them, played with the big-horned ram (he was always called "The Sheep" at Cypress Shore), and suffered the little negroes to tease him, for the sport of seeing them scamper when once old Butty's ire was stirred into aggressive warfare. The war was thus, occasionally, very literally and precisely, and vigorously carried into Africa.

Now, it so happened that, in my eagerness to see the cause of the unwonted commotion beneath the piazza, I left the gate open. Old Butty, being of a Paul-Pryish inquiring turn of mind, and, out of all question, somewhat experienced in the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties, took a fancy to follow me into the yard. This he did, as I have since learned from Old Dinah, in a very gingerly style, with many a glance of anxious inquiry at the group beneath the piazza. As chance would have it, the first object that stirred his belligerent propensities was the hinder man of Professor Matters,

as he bent low over the excavation (then about three feet deep). The more immediate cause, mayhap, was the red lining of a dingy old surtout of the professor's, in which he was then intrenched, and which is destined to make some figure in a future chapter of this veracious history. Whatever it was, in defiance of all the acknowledged etiquette of modern warfare, and in utter insubordination to the articles of war, Old Butty retreated to what appeared to him to be the precise distance for an effective charge, gave his diminutive tail a short, abrupt, wrath-instigated wiggle, and like a war-horse that smelleth the battle, bounded towards the unconscious professor in the *pas de charge*, lowered his head, and "charged home upon him!"

The first glimpse I caught of the professor after I saw him falling headlong into the hole, I saw him prostrate between the two negroes. They, too, had been knocked down by the professor's momentum, and were rolling in a convulsion of laughter, while he was spitting the soft earth from his mouth in a paroxysm of ire.

"Patr'archs an' prophets!" sputtered he. "Ding it all tew dingnation! Who done that 'ere?" And he bounded vigorously forth from the excavation, with a very wrathful look of inquiry. There was no reply, for nobody could speak. My Aunt Corny was in tears of laughter. The colonel had sank down on a bench, and was holding his head on his hands, in the attitude of one of the principal figures in Hogarth's picture of the "Laughing Audience," in helpless convulsions; while what little physical strength remained to me I wholly lost, on seeing the professor seize old Butty by the horns and roll him several times over and over upon the grass.

There was no grace said that morning at breakfast; for although the colonel and his grave sister had somewhat recovered their composure, nothing could check the titillating giggle of the romping, laughter-loving Molly. The charming little girl would now and then assume a look of staid, demure firmness, not unworthy my Aunt Corny herself; but then she would, in the next moment, burst into uncontrollable peals of genuine, contagious, ringing, boisterous merriment. In this, to do him justice, the professor very good-naturedly joined, with the air of a man who wishes to make the best of a personal mishap.

When, at length, the incident was forgotten, I again asked for the explanation which I was on the point of demanding on my return from my morning walk. As I descended the steps of the piazza, I saw some of the servants rolling a barrel into the yard. They rolled it to the piazza and left it.

"What is this you are making?" I asked of my uncle, as he returned from a short stroll with his little pet, Miss Molly.

"What is it? why, a cistern, to be sure."

"A cistern?" I replied, a little incredulously.

"Yes, a cistern; and why not?"

"Why, it is all right, I've no doubt; but I confess I wonder at your having a cistern built when you have the sound at your door, and the best of springs within fifty yards."

"Well, that is all true enough, Gregory," said my uncle, somewhat testily; "but Professor Matters tells me that this water can't be healthy here in this low country. The swamps are all around us, you know; and the rain water when properly filtered is, he tells me,

the purest in the world. Besides, the expense is a mere trifle."

"How much, probably?"

"Why, twenty-five dollars for every thousand gallons."

"And how much will your's hold?"

"Possibly five thousand gallons."

"Which is one hundred and twenty-five dollars." A pretty good day's work."

"It takes two days, *two* days, Gregory," said my uncle, a little staggered; "besides, the professor furnishes the materials."

"Such as what?"

"Why, that barrel contains the principal part. He calls it hydraulic cement. I read something about it, not long since, in the 'Scientific American.'"

"So this is what he means by calling himself a professor of hydrology. A tolerably lucrative system. Three hundred and seventy-five dollars a week, to say nothing of the honor of the professorship."

"Why yes, Gregory; yes, that is doing pretty well. However, he is to arrange it with a pump, so that we can have it handy in the piazza. But come and look at it."

We joined the professor.

"What dew yaou say to that 'ere?" asked he, as he pointed triumphantly to the excavation. "Ain't it a great thing, naow?"

"It certainly is," I replied, demurely. "It will hold several thousand gallons."

"No, no! But won't it be a great addition to this ere

farm—or plantation, I believe you call it? Jest look at that 'ere!"

And he handed me a piece of hardened cement, as hard, apparently, as granite. "In three days that 'ere cistu'n 'll have a coatin' of cément just like this. Last forever, sir. Have it filtered through this 'ere box. Box filled with charcoal. Pipe goes up tew the pyazy with a pump, ye know."

"Exactly. You must find this a profitable profession."

"Wal, a feller would think so; but, bless your soul, it's very expensive this 'ere cément; and then it costs sich a power of money to travel. Bless your soul, I don't make scarcely nothin' at all!"

"Indeed?"

"Fact. I'm dewin' this 'ere cheap for the colonel, for he's a pertic'lar friend."

The mystery was solved. Simple as I thought him, he had already got the servants into submission, delighted my aunt Corny, fascinated little Molly, and persuaded my uncle John that nothing could prevent a fatal recurrence of his occasional attacks of colic, except the free and regular use of well-filtered rain water. I observed that the colonel had already a hypochondriac suspicion of the really excellent water of the spring.

"Have you constructed many of these?" I asked.

"Wal, no; not to speak on. But, bless your soul, sir, I *shall*. My system of hydrology, sir, is destyned to create a great revolution. Thousands o' people, sir, dyin' all over this American hemisphere, jest by the use of bad water. Why, sir, I've known a case of chronic rheumatism cured by this 'ere filtered cistu'n water in tew

weeks. Fact, sir. Got the stifikits, piles on 'em, in my travelin' bag. I'll go up and git 'em for ye. Like to have yew look at 'em."

"Thank you, professor; your word is amply sufficient."

"But, ye see, I'd a leetle rayther you'd see 'em. Sha'n't have time this arternune, ye know. Goin' to take dinner with the squire, yew remember."

He now disappeared. In a few moments he returned, bearing a package of greasy, cracked, much-bethumbed certificates of the cure of nearly every phase of mortal ailments, consumption not excepted.

CHAPTER IX.

FAMILY MATTERS.—THE DINNER AT SQUIRE BUTTERTON'S.

*"Queum vocet Divum populus ruentis
Imperf rebus?"*

*"Trust not the tale! The Pilgrim's hallowed shore,
Though strewn with weeds, is granite at the core!"*

O. W. HOLMES.

WE had a lunch that day, and the professor was called in. He remained but a moment, however, declaring that he could not "trust the cément to the niggers," and assuring us that the colonel's scuppernong (the cask was twenty-three years old) had made him "feel forty years younger." The colonel rode over to the fishery. Molly got up a game of hurly-burly with Linda, her little maid, and other children from the cabins, and I drew my chair beside my Aunt Corny for a chat.

It is now quite time to say to the reader that my uncle was the eldest of three brothers who had emigrated, originally, from England, and settled in Virginia. Two of them removed into Bertie, where one of them, Humphrey, had soon afterwards died of a bilious attack. The other, Hugh, remained in Virginia, and, but a few months after Humphrey's death, also died. Both had married, but the latter was childless. His wife did not long survive him. Hugh had two daughters, Kate and

Molly Smallwood, who came with their mother to reside at Cypress Shore soon after their father's death. The widow lived some four years after her removal, and then the daughters were adopted by their surviving uncle, John Smallwood. He had lost his wife before removing from Virginia, and when he settled at Cypress Shore, his maiden sister, Cornelia Smallwood, his housekeeper, Mistress Polly Feggins, and his son, Robert Smallwood, were his whole family.

It is necessary, also, to add that the colonel and my father, Mr. John Seaworthy, had married sisters. The latter was lost, in my boyhood, on the Florida Reefs; and I had imbibed his liking for the sea so far as to have made five voyages, and during which I rose to the berth of mate of one of the finest merchantmen in New York.

I remembered Kate as a plump, romping, spirited, hoydenish girl, of dark brown hair, and hazel eyes, whose mischievous twinkle betrayed her through a world of demureness.

Molly was of much fairer complexion; of a frailer and more delicate organization; sensitive, affectionate, apt; one of the spirits that cling to your best sympathies, you know not why; mercurial, imaginative, spiritual, not of the earth earthly.

The conversation turned upon the subject of Bob's letter.

"Does the colonel know of this whim about going to California?"

"Yes, indeed," said my Aunt Corny; "I showed him the letter; and, besides, he has received one himself, much in the same vein."

"That, then, is the reason why the colonel is so out of spirits?"

"Precisely. He has been quite lively since you came; but I can see that it wears upon him. O dear! what *shall* we do," exclaimed she, "to drive this foolish notion out of his head? Can you think of nothing, Gregory?"

"Why, my dear Aunt Corny," I said, very modestly, "I am nothing of a diplomatist, but I think something *can* be done."

"What?" asked my aunt, impetuously, and she actually stopped knitting.

"You say he has not seen Kate for more than two years?"

"Yes."

"And Kate has grown from a girl of fifteen into a lovely woman?"

"She's the belle of the seminary; a toast and a favorite everywhere. Stay—here is Madam Stewart's letter."

"Somewhat complimentary, certainly," said I, when I had glanced at the paragraphs to which my aunt directed my attention.

"But not at all *too* complimentary. She was here at Christmas, and spent the holidays; and I'm afraid to tell you what a sensation she made in old Bertie."

"Well, then, my dear aunt, send for her. Let her be here when Bob comes home, and I'll engage to keep him away from the gold mines."

"Sure enough!" exclaimed my aunt; "how stupid in me not to have thought of it! Shall I speak of it to the colonel?"

"If you please."

And my aunt disappeared to acquaint the colonel with our new system of tactics; averring, as she left me,

that she had seen the account of some such a plan in one of the magazines.

It was about three o'clock on the afternoon of the same day that Grief drew rein, and landed us at Squire Butterson's. The reader who is familiar with the geography of that region will understand me at once when I say that the house was two or three furlongs from the mouth of Salmon Creek, directly on the bank, and perched airily on an eminence on a little point, perhaps two hundred and fifty yards above what is known to the sailors as Gravestone Point. It overlooks quite a *reach* of the beautiful little river, and gives a fine view of the graver and statelier Chowan.

The rosy-faced, kind-hearted, but somewhat blustering old squire met us as we alighted, and welcomed us with courtly urbanity; rubbed his hands, and declared himself delighted to see us:

"Ah! how d'y, my little pet?" he exclaimed, as he lifted Molly in his arms and gave her a genuine hug; "delighted to see you. Run along and find Sophie and little Su. There they come, now! Such a romp as there 'll be to-day! Well, Miss Corny, you grow young as the spring opens. Allow me."

And he handed her very politely up the steps.

"I resign you to Madam Butterson. Professor Matters, I bid you welcome to Bachelor's Bay. Neighbor Smallwood, walk in. Make yourselves at home, if you please; and excuse me a moment while I receive Buckthorn and the doctor. You'll find Sayles in the parlor."

And, so saying, he left us. Uncle Baldy and the doctor arrived, and the bustle of reception was soon over. Madam Butterson, a matronly and somewhat corpulent

lady, engaged the professor in conversation; and, with womanly kindness and tact soon made him entirely at home; while, in the opposite corner, I was chatting with the very accomplished Mrs. Buckthorn, and with one whom I cannot mention so coolly, none other than a charming girl of nineteen, Miss Helen Jeffreys. Dr. Jeffreys had changed far less than his daughter. There was, possibly, an additional wrinkle in the fun-furrows that gathered so thickly at the outer corner of the eye; and, possibly, a little stronger tinge of gray might be detected in the long, lyart, and somewhat neglected locks of the finest hair in the world. The merry, fun-flashing eye was unchanged; the loud, clear, hearty, ringing tones of his good-humored voice; the dress, even to the tie of an unexceptionable cravat, were unchanged.

"Where is Madam Jeffreys to-day?" asked Mrs. Buckthorn.

"In Edenton, madam," said the doctor with a low bow. "We expected her last evening; but Balaam tells me that she has decided to remain there until Saturday. She has a very great horror, you know, of the ferry, and I fancy that she thought the sound a trifle too rough last evening."

Dinner was announced, and I somehow happened to be seated beside my fair friend Helen Jeffreys. I know not how to describe her; in what words to give the reader an idea of a somewhat slight but admirable form; a full, eloquent eye; a graceful step; a soft, low voice, that makes my heart throb the faster as I write of it; and a smile which won its way through all the yet discovered strong points of old bachelor entrenchments. I was glad to be relieved, in part, from a most uncomfortable

flutter by hearing the squire ask Professor Matters if he had read Mr. Clay's great speech.

"The last one, you mean, square?"

"Yes."

"Wal, no; I hain't seen it. I hearn 'em talkin' 'bout it to Edentown. It's a great speech, I guess."

"Very decidedly, yes. You are a whig, I hope, Professor Matters?"

"Wal, I can't exactly say I am. My father was a dimecrat, and I voted for Old Hickory myself; but I can't say I admire the dewins of the party now-a-days."

"In what particulars?"

"Why, this 'ere free sile, an' abolition, and so on."

"Then you are not an abolitionist?"

"No, SIR!"

"Then you regret, as much as we do, the unhappy agitation of the country during the present unprecedented session of strife and bitter feeling?"

"Sartinly I do so; and I'm glad to see brave old Harry Clay face the music. I rayther guess, tew, that our Daniel's gittin' riled, 'cordin' to all I've hearn."

"Mr. Webster, you mean."

"Ya-a-s."

"You of course know the state of feeling in your region of country, Professor Matters. Now, will you give us your opinion? Is a majority of the north hostile to us?"

"By no manner of means, square. Everybody there, almost, so fur as I'm acquainted, feels jest as I dew 'bout it. We would like to see the darkies free and enlightened citizens of this glorious republic; but then, ye see, we've made the bargain, an' as long as the constitution stands, *why we have no bizness with slavery.*"

"Do you think the northern people *know* much of the actual condition of the slaves, or of our state of society?"

"Not to speak on, square ; not to speak on. All I ever knowed 'bout the matter was from books that give some terrible 'counts of whippin', and huntin', and cuttin' the slaves."

"And have you seen anything of that kind in the south?"

"Not a bit of it, except in tew or three cases."

"Well, my dear sir, we admit that slaves are grossly misused in some cases ; but the cases are rare. You will consider yourself at liberty, I hope, to make any investigations you think proper. By the by, neighbor Buckthorn, I see they talk of Stanley for Governor. What say you?"

"I say no ; let him and Clingman stay in Congress to rare (rear) an' charge on them northern chaps. If things go on as they've begun, we'll have need of 'em. For my part, I'm tired of this bullying and bluffing. I hope the southern members will either withhold supplies or else dissolve the Union."

"Fie! neighbor Buckthorn!" exclaimed my uncle. "I am surprised to hear you say so. What reason can you assign?"

"Reason? reason enough, colonel. The North keeps up her aggressions year after year, and things are getting worse and worse. Why, a gentleman can't carry his servant north of Mason and Dixon's line. You hav'n't forgotten how the abolitionists stole Gabe away from your son Bob?"

"Not at all, uncle Baldy ; but allow me to ask how

you would feel in regard to this matter had you been born in Massachusetts or Connecticut?"

Mr. Buckthorn hesitated.

"Why, of course," interposed his lady, "precisely as northerners feel."

"Exactly so, ma'am!" exclaimed the professor; "you've jest hit the nail right on the head. Yaou see we're brung up to think a nigger jest as good as a white man; an' of course we say tew ourselves, haow 'ud we like to be slaves? It wouldn't dew, nohow. Wal, ye see yew're brung up right along with the niggers. I see, the childern play together and talk together, and they think, in course, that it's all right."

"Very true, Professor Matters," said my friend Dr. Jeffreys; "we are raised differently, and therefore must make allowance for each other's prejudices."

"Yew're right, doctor. I couldn't ha' said it better myself. It's jest what I said to Abraham Comes up to Steventown. Ye see he's an all-fired, pepper and vinegar, hammer an' tongs, rarin' and tearin' abolitionist. So ses I tew Abr'am (people call him Abr'am for short), ses I, 'Hev yaou ever bent tew South Ca'liny, or Virginny, or any o' them 'ere southern States?'

"'Wal, no,' ses he; 'but s'pose I hain't?'

"'Why,' ses I, 'how much dew yew know 'bout that 'ere country?'

"'Why, *all* 'bout it,' ses he.

"'Haow?' ses I.

"'Why, can't I read the 'Mancipator, an' Liberator, an' _____.'

"'Who's the editors o' them 'ere papers?' ses I.

“ ‘ Why, abolitionists, of course ; Mr. Garrison and Mr. ——.’ ”

“ ‘ Wal, then,’ ses I, ‘ yew’re jest lookin’ at one side o’ the picter, *and that’s the darkest side blacked over.*’ ”

“ ‘ Wal,’ says he, ‘ I b’lieve you’ve pretty near hit the nail on the head.’ ”

“ Do I understand you to say, Professor Matters,” said Uncle Baldy, “ that you approve of the institution of slavery ? ”

“ No, sir ; I can’t say as I dew. Providence has al’ays ’lowed it to exist, to be sure ; but, for my part, I can’t reconcile it to my feelin’s to look a nigger in the face ‘an’ call him my chattils.”

“ Did you see the account of the Southern caucus ? ”

“ Ya-a-s.”

“ And what do you think of it ? ”

“ Why, it’s a small corn in the Nashville Convention game o’ bluff.”

“ I think you will find to the contrary, professor.”

“ I think *not*. Anyhow, why not dew somethin’ instid o’ all this ’ere talkin’ ? ”

“ They *will* do something, sir ; and I am ready to shoulder my musket and meet the North on Mason and Dixon’s line. This Union is bound to dissolve, sir, sure’s you’re bawn ! ”

“ I hope not, friend Buckthorn ; I hope not. Mr. Clay was right. If yaou and your lady there ”—here the professor bowed smilingly to Madam Buckthorn—“ was to fall out ’bout anythin’—I don’t s’pose yew would, but *ef* yaou *should*—why, yaou wouldn’t dissolve the union, would ye ? ”

“ Hardly,” said Uncle Baldy, with a smile.

"Wal, then, this Union is Uncle Sam's family. We are brothers, and we must *dew* like brothers. We must have patience and have good feelin'. The Union, gentlemen," said the professor, warming a little, over a glass of scuppernong, "is jest for all the world like my hydraulic cément. It ain't so very hard to mix it, and put it well together; *but when it's once hardened and then broken, it ain't worth puttin' together.*"

At this stage of the discussion, we rose from the table, and the gentlemen went to the piazza with pipes and cigars. I lost much, I confess, of the professor's eloquence and Uncle Baldy's ultraism, in a low chat with my fair neighbor; and if this report of the conversation should ever meet the eye of either of them, I hope they will make all charitable allowance for its imperfections. There was another chat in the piazza. The conversation turned upon the agricultural peculiarities of the North and the South.

"I think we've rayther got the advantage on ye," remarked the professor.

"How?"

"Wal, for one thing, we hev better tools, and all that sort o' thing. We hev a power of hydraulic cistu'ns. There's an instance now," and the professor pointed towards a negro who was driving a yoke of oxen. "Twig that 'ere yoke. What is it? Nothin' in natur 'cept a round pine stick, strait as a gun-barrel. Now, I'll lay that ef yew'll examine them 'ere cattle's necks, yew'll find 'em raw."

"And how are they made in your country?"

"Why, they're made six or seven inches wide, and fitted to the neck, and polished equal to a silver cream-

pitcher. Besides, your farms are so thunderin' big. You can't half cultivate 'em. Manurin' five or six thousan' acres o' land is out of the question. 'Tain't no use talkin'."

"No doubt of it," replied the squire. "What other points have you noted?"

"Wal, tew say the truth, I hain't ben here long enough tew decide; but I'll give ye an idee or tew afore I leave."

"I understand you have a new invention for us, Professor Matters?" said Buckthorn. "Pray give me some account of it."

"Wal, sir, I can't give ye much account on't; for the system I foller is a secret. I may say this much though; and p'raps I may give a lectur' some o' these days on the subject—mebee to Edentown. I call it a new system of Hydrology; or, in other words, manufacturin' cistu'ns out of hydraulic cément. Yaou see, a great many kinds o' water is onhealthy, and there ain't *no* water that's quite pure; but rain water filtered thraough charcoal's bound to be pure. No need of any doctors where they use my cistu'ns."

"Indeed?"

"Trew's the 'Postles!"

"Why, Uncle Baldy," said the doctor, with a queer twinkle of the eye, "you must *have* one of these cisterns. They'll be the death of my profession, however."

In similar conversation the time wore away. Coffee was handed round, the horses were ordered, and we turned homeward. Will the reader think it an intrusion upon the more important matters of this history, if I say that I rode home with Dr. Jeffreys and his daughter?

"Where did you meet with the live specimen?" asked the doctor, as we rode towards Underwood.

I gave him, accordingly, the history of Professor Funnyford Matters; not omitting an account of the dinner on board the *Pennsylvania*, and our memorable voyage. And long and loud did the merry doctor laugh over the narration. A brisk drive of a mile brought us to the doctor's residence. The light of an open fire (bless the inventor of open fires and open doors, after the fashion of the Ancient Dominion!) shone charily through the windows as we approached the house. The doctor was called away soon after his arrival to attend a patient; and, with an injunction to Helen to take me in charge until his return, he left us—alone. Then came a chat about the past. We sung.

"I love the merry merry sunshine,
It makes the heart so gay!"

was the first in a goodly collection of songs. It called the sunshine to the face of the fair girl beside me. O! a gem of a woman was Helen Jeffreys! As I trace these lines in uncouth characters, I can recall, as if it were yesterday, the scene of that evening. The fire blazed cheerfully on the hearth; the cat purred quietly on the rug, in affectionate proximity to Birdo, the doctor's favorite pointer; the tall old-fashioned clock ticked in age-becoming gravity, and held up its long hands in warning to me, as I gazed on the mass of rich brown curls that fell over snowy shoulders, and the outline of the face which they half veiled from me. And then, as the rich tones of her voice rung to the words,

"To hear the sweet birds singing
On their summer holiday,"

and the gentlest eye in all the world was lifted to mine. I remember a sensation which, as nearly as I can imagine it, was very strikingly similar to the feeling that people are said to experience on the verge of a precipice, an irresistible desire, *videlicet*, to throw themselves headlong ! Time and again did I strive to utter the words that struggled to my lips ; and I was about to make a last, and stronger, and more desperate effort, when Dr. Jeffreys returned. Dear, dear Helen Jeffreys ! I— Bless me, what a confession I was going to make !

“ By the by,” said the doctor, after chatting awhile, “ I have a teacher for my little folk. The colonel and Squire Butterton are to send theirs, and we shall have a merry set of them. He is away just now.”

“ From the north ?”

“ Yes ; but not at all Yankeeish or provincial ; traveled, I fancy.”

“ And an author, too,” said Helen.

“ Indeed.”

“ Yes,” interposed the doctor ; “ and Helen has coaxed him into a permission for us to read the MS.”

“ Better than that, Mr. Seaworthy ; I have read a part of it to *him*. You’ll *like* Mr. Haynes, I am sure.”

“ I am quite sure I shall not,” thought I ; and omitting, with the reader’s permission, to state the precise locality to which I felt some inclination to send Mr. Haynes, not within reach of the hospitalities of the Humane Society, it must suffice to say that I remember wishing that I, too, was an author, to have my manuscript so read to me. And, when I retired that night, I did not lay my head upon my pillow until I had written an elaborate article for the — Magazine. I

dreamed, too, of Mr. Haynes and Helen Jeffreys; and got very much out of temper with myself when I awoke, by suffering his name to ring in my ears with every tone of Helen Jeffrey's voice. I rode home early that day. There was a queer twinkle in the doctor's eye as I pleaded headache; and his daughter's face was demurer than demureness as she informed me (my foot was in the stirrup) that Mr. Haynes would be home the next day. O! Mr. Haynes! Mr. Haynes! It was lucky for both of us that we did not meet that morning as I rode to Cypress Shore. Old Hampton was in a foam when I alighted; and I can never forgive myself for a kick that made old Ponto beat a most precipitate retreat.



CHAPTER X.

MY AUNT CORNY.—CLIMATE.—A CHILL.

*"Macies, et nova februm
Terris incubuit coliors."*

My Aunt Corny was one of my greatest favorites. She was, not to speak too definitely on such a subject, a middle-aged lady, of small stature. Her complexion was dark ; her eyes and hair black as night. She was thin, quite so ; and she was most literally of that degree of fragility which the winds of heaven may not visit too roughly. She increased her diminutive stature somewhat by wearing her hair through all the variations of the mode, in projecting puffs, which flanked a central pyramid, supported by a venerable comb, whose dimensions would frighten many a modern belle. She wore black almost uniformly ; and on some occasions sported a cap, which, as not one of the initiated, I cannot be expected to describe. She was never out of humor ; that is to say, seriously so. True, she would sometimes betray a shade of displeasure at some negligence of a servant, or the fussiness of the over-particular Mistress Polly Feggins, the housekeeper ; but, beyond this, her life having passed its April and summer, resembled those weeks of uninterrupted sunshine which sometimes mark the early fall. She was refined and lady-like in all she

did. She had an ear for the faintest sigh, and a heart open as the day to every generous and charitable sympathy.

She was, however, a timid, shrinking sort of woman, and of that highly excitable temperament called *nervous*. She was, too, something of an invalid. She had a truly apostolic faith in the cold-bath, shower-bath, flannel, and flesh-brushes; and these articles of faith not only fretted her into indisposition, but, I am sorry to add, sometimes became topics of conversation, which were anything but edifying to her auditors. She had, too, much the same sort of faith in early rising; and she thus not unfrequently robbed herself of needful rest. For this she religiously atoned by a longer nap after dinner.

She was a famous doctress, too. Every planter has his medicine chest, and he becomes, as do the members of his family, sufficiently familiar with the ordinary diseases of the climate to prescribe very safely in many cases which, in town, would receive the attention of a regular physician. This will explain the fact that my Aunt Corny knew, to a grain, the necessary dose of blue mass or quinine for the ordinary intermittent fever, as well as the milder remedies. But her chief forte was in spring medicines, as she called them. It was her custom every summer to gather her stock of herbs; chamomile, catnip, thoroughwort, red pepper, pennyroyal—what not? These were carefully dried and preserved for use. Then she knew so many varieties of bitters, each an unfailing specific! and she had a way of commending her medicines by taking them herself. She was fully persuaded that the colonel was fast going to his grave because he would not take her doses; while he, jolly old soul! laughed remorselessly at her until he saw the tears start-

ing, and then he would kiss her, take a spoonful of bitters with the very wryest of faces, and restore her to good humor. There was one closet *filled* with her medical preparations and appliances; and to this, at the first visible symptom of illness, did she fly. Did the colonel growl with the rheumatism, she was loud in the praise of spirits of turpentine, hot vinegar, iodine, and British oil. Did he groan with his periodical colic, forth from the miniature dispensatory came ether, laudanum, and peppermint, while Grief was dispatched with a cup of spice and brandy to be heated for instant administration. Did Molly cough, there was no end to the forthcoming syrups. Had Polly Feggins a sick headache, you would have thought the sick room a hospital; so numerous were the infallible remedies.

This, to say the truth, was rather annoying to the colonel; for she would keep a servant a week in the hospital, when he might as well have been relieved in twenty-four hours.

"Don't dose the sick ones to death, sister Corny," he would say. "Give them one medicine at a time."

"Why, brother John, how *can* you say so, and the poor creatures suffering so?"

"Well, well, Corny, have your own way. The ladies always do!" and the colonel would beat a retreat.

Blind Alice, the greyhound, staggered up to me unconscious of the ungentle reception which I had given old Ponto, with a mute but expressive and affectionate welcome. I bent over her and caressed her, in a somewhat penitential mood; and old Ponto, generous old fellow, sidled up and was also patted. That he did not die of surfeit that week is more fairly attributable to his own ostrich-like

digestive powers than to any deficiency in the quantity of food with which I stuffed him, by way of expiatory sacrifice, as fruits meet for repentance. I was always gentle, by the by, to domestic animals. Not that I lacked, in my boyhood, the universal propensity to test and exercise my power over them; but I was so taught by my father—peace to his ashes! As I grew older, I had some cause to suspect that my organ of benevolence, phrenologically speaking, was somewhat too largely developed; for, not to mention dogs and cats apoplec- tically departed this life, I so stuffed a favorite black horse with oats and corn meal that he very unexpectedly went to the bourne so fatal to all travelers;

*“Nox, fabulæ que Manes,
Et domus exilis Plutonia.”*

To this day, possibly for the same reason, it is the rarest thing in the world for me to hunt or fish. But, pardon me; I am not writing an autobiography.

On entering the house, I saw Grief going up stairs with a bowl of tea.

“Grief,” said I.

“Sah.”

“Who is sick?”

“Massa ’Fessah.”

“You mean Professor Matters.”

“Ya—a-s, maussa.”

“What ails him?”

“Do’ know, massa. He done gin out dis mawnin’. Miss Corny ben give him fo’ dose physic. Got a mighty bad aguy, I b’lieve.”

I lost no time in going to the professor’s chamber.

He was in bed, and a single glance revealed to me the truth of Grief's account as to the ague ; for his bed was shaking spasmodically, and his teeth were chattering beyond the power of control. He looked up at me, as I entered, with that expression of despairing terror and eager inquiry which is so often seen in a man, hitherto uniformly healthy, who has suddenly been laid upon a sick bed.

"Ah ! how's this, professor ?" said I, as cheerfully as I could.

"I'm goin tew be very sick, I'm afraid."

"I reckon not."

"Oo-oo-oo-oo ! dear me, how cold I am. What in natur makes the weather so cold all to once ?"

"You have a chill."

"A what ?"

"A chill."

"What on airth du yaou mean by a chill ?"

Here Grief entered with a message, and a bowl of pepper-tea from my Aunt Corny.

"A chill is the usual term here for what you, perhaps, more commonly call an ague."

"Yaou don't mean to say't I've got the bilious ?"

"Perhaps not," I replied, a little maliciously, seeing the professor's alarm.

"Don't deceive me. Dew yaou think I've got a tetch o' the bilious ?"

"A very slight one, possibly."

"I'm afeard it's all over with me. I wish my mother knew where I was. Yaou can find my papers, ef—ef anythin' should happen, in that 'ere trunk. I——"

"O fudge ! You talk like a child. It's only a chill."

"*Only* a chill? He! he! he! *only* a chill? I dew believe I shel shiver myself tew death. I begin to understand now what's kep me a shiverin' so lately. Fust most froze, and then b'ilin' hot; stewed eenamost to death."

Here Grief reappeared with a message of inquiry, and a decoction of nutmeg and French brandy from my Aunt Corny. I was about to protest against the professor's taking it when in came Dr. Jeffreys.

"Well, professor; got you on your back, eh?"

"Wal, ya-a-s; pretty much."

"Don't look so dolefully, professor; you won't die this time. You have merely got a chill. I'll have you up to-morrow."

"Dew yaou really think so, doctor?"

"Of course I do. When were you taken?"

"Wal, I hardly know. I felt a dreadful achin' in my bones yesterday; and I've kind o' felt weak and limpsy like, jest like an old basket, for several days."

"Well, don't be alarmed. Nobody minds a chill in Bertie. I have one every day, myself, sometimes two. Take this pill in about two hours. In the morning take a dose of oil. Then, during the day, take quinine once in two hours. If you can't sleep to-night, take one of these every half hour." And the doctor handed him a box.

"What's all this?"

"Some of Aunt Corny's preparations."

"Well, pitch the stuff out of the window, if you hope to survive till morning. I've another call to make. Good morning, professor."

"Good mornin', doctor. Yaou'll drop in ag'in, won't ye?" asked the invalid, meekly.

"Of course."

And the doctor vanished.

The chill passed away; and, after a violent fever, during which the terror of the professor was most ludicrous, the medicine was taken. In the evening, the doctor called again, in company with the squire and Uncle Baldy. The colonel also came, and sat for an hour in the sick-room; and we succeeded in restoring the patient to something like his usual flow of spirits. When they had gone, I administered the prescribed opiate, and the professor was soon asleep.

The next day he was decidedly better. In the evening he dressed, and made his appearance in the drawing-room.

"I'll be darned ef I didn't think I was goin' to kick the bucket," he said, as he finished giving an account of his sensations to Aunt Corny. She, good soul, was a ready listener; and expressed her wonder that any one in the world should be without nutmeg and red pepper, evidently ascribing the professor's recovery to the inundation of doses she had sent him the day before. There was crockery enough at that moment in the professor's chamber to "set up" a small family a housekeeping.

"This is a queer climate, anyhow," said the professor, musingly. "I used tew wonder what in natur made people 'bout here, some on 'em least-ways, look so yaller and onhealthy, an' walk so faint-away-like. But I b'lieve I've seen the elephant. Ever sence this warm spell o' weather come on, I've felt amazin' weak an' poorly. Darn the hot weather! Give me the White

Mountains, or old Varmount State, or even Mount Desert Island, tho' it ain't so very cold there, bein' surrounded by salt water. Ef I thought I was goin tew hev another chill, I hope I may hoe ef I wouldn't take out for hum to-night."

"O, no fear of that," said the colonel. "You will get better directly."

"Wal, I hope I shall."

"I am sure you will."

"Yes," said my Aunt Corny; "I have put up a bottle of bitters for you; and, if you will take a spoonful of them three times a day, before eating, you will get well directly."

"Thank ye, ma'am! but I——"

I winked at the professor. He understood me, and added,

"I'm very much obleeged tew yaou. I've no doubt they're excellent."

"They are so; and if you will permit me, I would recommend to you the cold-bath and hair gloves."

"Now, sister Corny!" exclaimed the colonel, laughing, "don't——"

My Aunt Corny's feelings were hurt; and, putting her handkerchief to her eyes, she left the room. The colonel followed her, and I heard a low conference, interrupted once or twice by a sob.

"Ah-h-h-h!" said the colonel, as they re-entered the drawing-room, with the tone of a man whose throat has been burned by brandy; "well, I believe it is a good thing, Corny. Professor Matters, allow me to recommend to you the virtues of the Nutmeg-bitters. I can't vouch for the ingredients; but for the *strength*——"

“Now, brother John!”

“Well, well, Corny; I won’t say anything more about it.”

And Aunt Corny betook herself, with a martyr-like air, to her knitting.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE SCHOOLMASTER.

"He showed how Wisdom turns its hours to years,
Feeding the heart on joys instead of fears,
And worships God in smiles, and not in tears."

LAMAN BEANCHARD.

"Work! and despair not!"—GOTHE.

I took my favorite walk that evening along the shore of the sound; following the beach for a couple of furlongs, and then turning into the woods where the pines had strewn their carpeting of leaves, and in which many a romantic wood-road wound through its silent depths.

My dear reader! have you a sorrow at heart, a care unsoothed, a purse in extremis, an aching brain—in short, are you in "any affliction of mind, body, or estate," go to the woods. The bard tells you truly that, for her true worshiper, Nature hath

"For his gayer hours * * * a smile
And eloquence of beauty; and she glides
Into his darker musings, with a mild
And gentle sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness ere he is aware."

Yes, go to the woods; its silence shall preach to thee. Bare thy brow, kneel in its solemn shadows, and peace shall flow into thy heart "as a river."

I spent perhaps an hour in the shade of the pines, and returned home.

As I entered the house, I heard the voice of my Aunt Corny (it was getting to be unpleasantly shrill) just quivering into the expiring sigh of

“Thou, thou reign’st in this bosom.”

I was about to enter the parlor and sing with her (she always insisted that I was a “great help to her in a second”), when she struck a symphony entirely new to me. I paused. A low, clear, rich voice, but something sad, as I thought, blended pleasantly with hers in the following ballad :

I.

O! fairest of the many fair
Is my own Molly Bell ;
The lassie of the golden hair,
O! my own Molly Bell !
Molly Bell !
When, when shall I see her,
My own Molly Bell ?

II.

O! years have fled, I am alone,
My own Molly Bell !
My dear ones to their rest have gone,
My own Molly Bell.
Molly Bell !
When, when shall I see her,
My own Molly Bell ?

III.

The rover’s sands are well nigh run,
O! my own Molly Bell !
Another hath the maiden won,
O! my sweet Molly Bell !
Molly Bell !
When, when shall I see her,
My own Molly Bell ?

IV.

Farewell! a long, a last adieu,
My own Molly Bell!
And life's last prayer I'll breathe for you,
My own Molly Bell!
Molly Bell!
No more shall I see her,
My sweet Molly Bell!

The song ceased, and I entered the parlor. As I did so, my aunt rose from the piano.

"Mr. ——" (here she said something that sounded like Gay, or Gray, or Hayes), "let me make you acquainted with my nephew, Mr. Gregory Seaworthy."

I bowed, and accepted the hand of the stranger; all the more cordially, I confess, for his performance at the piano. I could see but little to impress me in the hasty glance which I gave him in the ceremony of the introduction, save that he was a small, pale, slightly formed young man of an almost unnatural brilliancy of eye. There was nothing fierce or unpleasant in its lustre. To the contrary, although he did not smile, the look was full of kindness. But the most striking characteristic, and the one by which I best remember him, was an expression of calmness, thought, *power* of mind, and greatness of heart. We resumed our singing, and ran over the greater part of my aunt's collection of songs; the most of which, I undertake to say, did not date farther back than the fifteenth century.

My uncle had rode out into some of the fields, and Professor Matters was busily at work upon the cistern. Little Molly was ailing, and, my aunt informed me, had kept her room during the whole morning. I proposed, therefore, to my new acquaintance, whose name I had

not yet learned, to walk with me. My favorite walk, as I have already said, was on the shore of the Albemarle ; and thither we bent our steps.

"That is a glorious sight to me," said the stranger, pointing to the sound. "I wonder how many there are who feel like myself, that this world of ours is *full* of beauty, in its lowliest and homeliest range of visible forms?"

"They are few, I fear, very few."

"And such is precisely *my* fear. May not this be the compensation to the scholar for the trammels of the position which society has allotted him?"

"But is society at fault in the matter? Are you among those who demand a reform, or a reorganization of it?"

"With some qualification, yes. Is it not an enigma? It seems to me the Falstaff of the great comic tragedy of Life ; or rather a compound of Falstaff, Shylock, Dogberry, Jack Cade, and the Vicar of Wakefield. Keen, careful, considerate ; prudent above the degrees of economy, thrift, guardianship, or housewifery ; yet every day the victim—yes, the mother and perpetrator of humbug."

I thought of the professor's system of hydrology.

"Society, sir," continued my companion, "is the patron saint of poets, plasters, panaceas, and pills ; the pretended fosterer of Genius ; claiming, with motherly solicitude, the care of the nestling, from the hour when it breaks the shell until it soars with an untired wing in mid heaven ; yet starving him, as she does jurymen, into full-fledged flight. She is the benevolent builder of hospitals, almshouses, and asylums, to whom all shadowy,

white-headed, soup-fed, ghost-like, impalpable urchins, in all work-houses, continually do cry."

"You are misanthropic."

"Not at all, nor visionary. But as an humble *one* in the great brotherhood of scholars, I protest against her neglect of them. Why, sir, look at *me*!" and he turned to me, betraying a bright flush of the cheek which boded ill for him.

"Look at me, sir!" he continued; "there is no shadow of vanity in the assertion, when I say that I have the capacity to do some better service for society than to teach the occult mysteries of Noah Webster and Lindley Murray. I fret in my fetters; and the impatient spirit is fast gnawing its way out of its frail 'clay tenement.' "*"

His eye glistened, and his slight frame quivered with excitement as he spoke. He had removed his hat, and his long, wiry, black hair was blown back from his forehead. His features were awakened from their repose; and I thought, as I looked on him, that I had never seen a finer impersonation of the higher and nobler qualities and faculties of mind and heart.

"Why not write?" I asked, thinking to divert his thoughts from an exciting topic.

"Do you know what you ask me?" he said, almost fiercely. "I *am* writing. When the toil of the school-room is over, I do write. I have already written a book in which I have endeavored to set my northern friends right in regard to the state of society at the south."

"You are from the north, then?"

"Yes."

* John Weiss.

"Yes, everywhere, and always. Old garrulous History, sir, has not words to tell of the service the scholar hath done among his sons. The fairest of earth's flowers grow upon his grave. He has not shrunk from the dustiest avenues of toil; statesman, general, poet, preacher, philosopher—what not?—he is ever the ministering servant."

"But remember," said I, "that his pursuits keep him aloof to a greater or less degree from society."

"Aloof, sir? Yes, you are right; but society should not therefore forget him. But he is not always aloof. He has led the oppressed through the sea of the wilderness to freedom. He touched the Hebrew lyre, and have not his lines gone out over all the earth? Aloof, sir? Why, what nearer communion with men than through books?"

"But so few read."

"True, it is so indeed; and therefore was it that the prophet's lines of promises to these latter days were sealed to all but the scattered few; and when the scholar would have taught his fellow-men, they shunned him as they would shun the pestilence. Are not the devil and Doctor Faustus mentioned together? Wizard! sorcerer! were the epithets for him. Society is too refined now-a-days, sir, to burn him at the stake; but, she calls him enthusiast; she barter his blood and sinews and grudges him the scanty pittance of his hire. O! world, world. Thou that crucifiedst thy Saviour, that stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would wisdom have gathered thee under her wings, and thou wouldst not!—But you spoke of society here?"

"Yes."

"And does society here, too, wrong the scholar?"

"It disappoints me."

"How?"

"In very many ways. The contrast between north and south is very great. You find, for instance, the better educated and more refined people of the north, as a general thing, residents of the village or city; whereas, the most cultivated and liberal people I have met in the south have very generally been residents in the country. I had wrong notions, to some extent, or, perhaps I should rather say, one-sided notions of the institutions of the south—slavery, more particularly."

"How so?"

"Why, I had simply thought of it, as indeed many southern gentlemen of the highest respectability think, as an evil, a very great evil. I had heard of the abuses with which the system is chargeable, even if it be defensible when not so abused. But the other side of the picture, if not studiously concealed from the masses at the north, has never to my knowledge been fairly laid before them. They are not told, for instance, that the children of both master and slave are playfellows; that there are a great many slaves who would not accept freedom; and that many gentlemen hold slaves, not so much because they approve the system, as that the state of society makes it well nigh impossible that he should live here without being a slaveholder."

"Then, of course, you have no sympathy with such men as Garrison, and Phillips, and Quincy?"

"Yes, I *have*; just so much as this. Could my will accomplish it, I would have every man free, and *let him find his level in society, instead of being fettered to a particular caste*. But I am far from considering the system

so far wrong, and so great an evil, as to justify the overthrow of the social and political organization of society."

"Do you not think that the elements of society are such as to make it inevitable that the same evil would be found in any possible organization of society?"

"Most assuredly. I am not of those who look forward to a future perfect state of society. But whatever Philanthropy can legitimately do in the reformation of any of the evils of our social system, she has my sympathy in the effort. The evils and blessings of society are comparative, and no man shall be my teacher in regard to the institution of which we are speaking who has not lived *here* and seen its operations."

"You admit, then, that the North has wronged the South in this matter?"

"Both have done wrong, sir. Neither of them seem to remember that their education is entirely different, and that what one is taught from infancy to think right, the other is taught to consider the greatest of all wrongs. They are both in fault, sir. There should be more charity and liberality on both sides."

Such was the tenor of our conversation. As we approached the house on our return, we met the professor.

"Ah!" said he, in his most nasal tone, "ah! Mr. Haynes! haow dew yaou dew? Mr. Seaworthy, your most obedient. The cistun's done, gentlemen, or, as Grief said jest naow, I've 'done finished it.'"

"So this is Mr. Haynes, eh?" thought I, as we entered the house. A few games at backgammon whiled away the time until dinner. In the evening I rode with him to Underwood. His modesty and reserve in the presence of *Helen Jeffreys* very speedily moderated, though they

did not remove my apprehensions. He had disarmed me, however, and I resolved to let matters take their own course. I have known wiser men than I come to the same sage conclusion.

The evening passed pleasantly away. I retired with the schoolmaster, at a late hour, to his study. His table was covered with manuscripts. I questioned him concerning his success as an author.

"Why, sir," he replied, "it has not been very flattering. A lady friend of mine carried this" (pointing to a MS. volume) "to New York some weeks since, and offered it to several of the leading publishers. Their replies were the same—simply that they could get English books for nothing, and that, therefore, they preferred to reprint English books rather than *pay* American writers for a less saleable commodity."

"Will you not, then, publish at all?"

"Perhaps I may. I am unwilling to think there are no publishers who are disposed to encourage our own authors. I am not, however, very sanguine. I am paid already for the labor of writing in hearing my book read to me by Helen Jeffreys."

"A somewhat unsubstantial payment."

"No, sir; I—but I won't trust myself to speak of her. I seldom speak *to* her. I shall not be here long. I am poor, and were I rich," added he, after a prolonged cough, "I could not tell her that—that——"

He began coughing again, and did not finish the sentence. The subject was not again adverted to.

When I returned that night to Cypress Shore, my Aunt Corny gave me something of his history. He had an invalid mother and sisters dependent on his exertions.

This, with other embarrassments, had, she said, made him gloomy and reserved, not to say unsocial. He rarely left his chamber except for his school-room. When he did so it was for a walk in the woods. He seemed to feel that wealth placed a barrier between him and his employers; and although Dr. Jeffreys sometimes succeeded in restoring him to something like good spirits, it was but for a short time. He then became, she said, more unsocial than ever. She concluded by urging me to show him all possible kindness, and, with some not very definite reflections on the diversity of condition among men, I bade her good night and retired to my chamber. I remember thinking that I would not again decide to dislike a man until I should previously see him. And then came a thought of the professor, and of Helen Jeffreys, and—I was asleep.

CHAPTER XII.

MAIL-DAY.

"What's in a NAME?"

ON the following morning, being Saturday, the professor reminded me at an early hour of my promise to accompany him to the post-office. The reader who has ever sojourned in a region of weekly or semi-weekly mails will readily understand the excitement of the mail-days at Cypress Shore. The colonel was looking for *The Intelligencer*, my Aunt Corny for a magazine, or a letter from Bob or Kate Smallwood. Molly herself was beginning to look forward to mail-day as the certain source of pleasure.

The professor declined riding on horseback, and the carriage was ordered. Meanwhile, Broomstraw was ordered for my especial benefit; not only because I preferred the saddle, but because I had known such an accident as meeting a certain fair lady whose equestrian excursions I was nothing loth to share. Leaving my uncle and the professor to jog on by themselves, I remained awhile with my Aunt Corny, to practice what she was pleased to call "a new piece of music;" none other (low be it spoken) than "The Carrier Dove." I have not yet mentioned to the reader, and I am yet reluctant to say, that my excellent aunt had at the age of

seventeen a lover who belonged to the dragoons. He was perfection by her account ; and was in fact as noble a fellow as ever bestrode a charger. Something wild, to be sure ; but then that might be overlooked in a dragoon. His memory was the green spot in the past to my aunt ; and she never sung one of her sentimental songs without saying, "Ah ! if you could have heard poor Henry's second to that !"

My uncle's rickety old piano (it had not been tuned since the war of 1812) gave forth a jingling accompaniment, with many a startling note of complaint ; but the song was finished at last, and my Aunt Corny took my hand in hers as she said, "How much that reminds me of poor Henry !"

I pressed her thin fingers in mine, with my best effort to look sympathetic, and hurried away. Much to my regret, I saw nothing of the doctor or of Helen ; and my ride to the post-office was somewhat dull and lonely. I never knew Broomstraw to be so snail-paced before, and I passed the beautiful wood-roads in the groves between Cypress Shore and the post-office with never a look at them. When I dismounted at the store, there were a score of country gentlemen lounging about it, awaiting the arrival of the mail. There were, too, some half a dozen boys, with little letter-bags, who were quite as eagerly looking in the direction in which the mail-carrier usually approached the office. The professor was in the midst of a group of persons, to whom he was explaining the merits of his new system of hydrology. Such, at any rate, I supposed to be the case, for I heard him say, as I was shaking hands with Uncle Baldy Buckthorn, "No doubt on't, gentlemen. They ain't ben

such a diskivery sense Ginerall Scott made his celebrated hauls of the Montezumys."

"That must have been great fishing, Professor Matters," said Dr. Jeffreys, very dryly.

"Wal, ya-a-s; it *must* ha' been, tho' I never hearn tell o' Mexico's bein' a great fishin' country. Anyhow, I——"

The professor's next remark is lost to the world. There is no telling what he might have said had not the post-boy very inconsiderately blown his horn to announce his arrival. It required no great length of time, as the reader would readily suppose, to open the mail. Mr. Sayles proceeded to take the wrappers from the letters, while his son, a lad of fifteen, distributed the newspapers, together with some public documents from the Hon. Mr. O——, the district representative. I stood quite near the polite Mr. Sayles.

"One for you, Mr. Seaworthy," said he, with a smile. "Mr. Buckthorn, two for you; and Mrs. Buckthorn's magazine. Squire Butterson, there is not a single letter for you."

"The devil there isn't?"

"I am very sorry. Better luck next time. Dr. Jeffreys, you are in the same predicament. Colonel Smallwood is more fortunate. Let me see; one, two, three."

We did not break the seals. Squire Butterson had opened *The Intelligencer*, while Uncle Baldy tore the wrapper from *The Union* (he happened to be the only democrat in the neighborhood). Both gentlemen soon had a group of listeners around them. Uncle Baldy read a notice of the previous day's debate in the senate,

while the squire read an article in *The Intelligencer* entitled "The Evil of the Day."

"An exceedingly good article," said the squire; and he folded the paper, and put it quietly in his pocket. Mr. Buckthorn then read some extracts from Southern newspapers, and Mr. Sayles read some editorial comments on the Territorial Bills.

"Excuse me, gentlemen, if you please," said he as he closed the paper, "I must make up the mail."

"They ain't nothing for me, I s'pose?" said the professor.

"What is the name?" asked Mr. Sayles, with his politest bow.

"Matters, Professor F. Matters."

"I believe not. Stay, I may have left one in the bag. It sometimes happens. I declare I have!—for you too, I fancy—'Professor Fatty Matters, Merry Hill Post-of——'"

"Jerewsalem!" shouted the professor; and rapidly and ingloriously descended his white hat to the floor. "I dew b'lieve that 'ere name 'll stick tew me forever!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed some one at the door as the professor's angry words fell upon his ear; "what's the times in thar?"

There was no retreat for the professor. His indignation had got the better of his prudence. A group was soon gathered around him.

"What's the trouble?" asked Uncle Baldy.

"Trouble? trouble *enough*! My name's Funnyford Matters, as I've told ye afore, and the fool has writ it Fatty! I'll be —— ef I don't give up hydraulickin' and retire to private life! Come, colonel, let's go hum!"

And, amid a roar of laughter, my uncle accompanied him to the carriage and ordered Grief to drive home. As a matter of course, the first thing after our arrival was the opening of the letters. Professor Matters was disappointed, he said, in not receiving a letter from home. Mr. Bond had promised him during his stay "to Edentown" to forward any letters which might come to that place for him; as it was, he had merely received a line from a house in Norfolk advising him of the shipment of five barrels of hydraulic cement, by the good schooner *Sarah Porter*, Hines, master, and expressing the hope that it might arrive safely and prove satisfactory.

"Do you hear of any one who needs a cistern?" said my Aunt Corny to the professor.

"O! yes indeed, ma'am. Mr. Buckthorn's con-clewded to hev one; an' Mr. Sayles gin me some encouragement. Tew or three other gentlemen spoke about it. Ef my expenses wa'n't so much I could dew a pretty tol'ble good bizness here."

"I hope you can make it convenient to stay with us a few days longer."

"Why, ya-a-s, ma'am; I guess I will, My cément don't git here, and I can't dew nothin' till it comes."

"I am glad to hear you say so," said my uncle. "You must see something more of Bertie. Next Tuesday is court-day, and you can see a pretty fair representation; Wednesday is muster-day, and on Thursday there is what we call a big meeting. Besides, we must get up an opossum and coon hunt for you. And, now I think of it, there is a spruce young widow to whom I

shall take great pleasure in introducing you. Perhaps you will decide to become a citizen of Old Bertie."

"Hardly, colonel, hardly; though I mought. They's no tellin' what mought happen. I was al'ays a great ladies' man."

Dinner was now announced. The professor had so far fancied southern customs as to retire to his chamber for a siesta; the colonel followed his example, and I was about to retire from the parlor to give my Aunt Corny the same privilege, when she beckoned to me to stay.

"Letters from Bob," she said, as I seated myself beside her on the sofa. I opened one and read as follows:—

"PROVIDENCE, *March 25th*, 1849.

"MY DEAR FATHER:—I have no words to tell you how happy I was on reading your last letter. I expected a long letter of remonstrance against what I feared might appear to you to be an unreasonable whim. I believe I was always a little inclined to be a little rebellious. This I am most heartily sorry for; and, to show you how much I value your confidence and the kindly tone of your letter, I give you my word that I will not go to California without your consent. Moreover, as I have but a year to stay, I will not leave college until I have seen you.

"Meanwhile, do not misunderstand me. These hard-working northerners have set me thinking. I am getting to be half an abolitionist. When I see these New-Englanders (let the name Yankee be no longer a reproach to them in your ears), busy as bees, 'hard-working, ambitious, energetic, ingenious, and contrast their life of

activity, bustle, and usefulness with ours, I long to throw away the crutches and to be something of myself. Well, then, here is the key to my wishes with regard to a voyage to California. You will say 'Come home. The professions are open to you. Broad acres yet untilled await your energies, ready to reward you a thousandfold for whatever toil you may bestow upon them.' But, remember that I would win my own way. I have a strong desire to eat bread of my own earning. I envy no success that toil among equals shall not give me. Here I can so eat the bread of honest toil. At home I cannot. People would call me insane, even were I to dispense with the services of an overseer; and, for a life which counts no worthier objects than fox-hunting and other kindred sports, no higher excitement than that of a pic-nic, a summer at Nag's Head, or the arrival of the semi-weekly mail; why, 'I would as soon not be.'

"I heard Wendell Phillips the other evening, and although I am not yet a convert to his doctrines, I say to you frankly I think him a great and good man. Such a man may be pardoned if indeed it be true that he gives undue prominence to the one great object of his eloquence. I cannot help wishing that servitude, *as a system*, to say the least, were done forever. I would fain converse with you on this subject. I am not hot-headed (if I know myself), nor am I a socialist, or disorganizer, or reformer. I see what I cannot help regarding as an evil, and humbly and sincerely, as well as calmly and rationally, I am searching for the truth. May the great problem be peacefully and amicably solved!

"Permit me to give it as my opinion, somewhat slowly and carefully adopted, that Webster was right when he said, the other day, that nine-tenths of the North would support the Constitution, no matter what might be their personal preferences, if that instrument were yet to be adopted. Enough.

"I can see from my window, as I write, the tall spars of a noble ship which is advertised to sail, a month from to-day, for California. The riggers are already at work. There is a man at this moment in her foretopmast cross-trees. Not an hour ago the barque C—— got under way for San Francisco. I could hear the roisterly chorus of the crew as they manned the brakes of the windlass (you see I have already caught some of the nautical terms); the anchor was soon apeak. Then there was a pause. Presently the sails fell from the yards, home went the sheets, up went the yards, the foretopsail was laid to the mast, the anchor broke ground, and in a few minutes the beautiful vessel was sailing, under her royals, out of the harbor.

"I am writing you a long letter. It will be but a very few days now before I am with you. I shall probably stop a day in Richmond, and try to persuade Cousin Kate to go home with me. I shall hardly know her, I fancy, she is so grown. Besides, it has been so very long since I saw her. Buckthorn writes me that she is something of a *belle*. I will not detain you longer than to say, what I need not say, that I am, always,

"Your affectionate son,

"ROBT. SMALLWOOD.

"P. S.—Remember me in all kindness to Molly, and to—everybody within forty miles of Cypress Shore. Any

news of Cousin Gregory? I see his ship reported among the arrivals at New York."

"Here's another," said my aunt, as I returned the first to her. "On his way, you see."

"Yes; it is post-marked 'Richmond.'"

"Read it aloud, won't you, Gregory? I've read it three or four times, but I am never tired of hearing a good letter. Poor Henry wrote an elegant letter! Bob improves; don't you think so?"

"Decidedly; yes. Let's see—

"'RICHMOND, *April 2d*, 1849.

"'MY DEAR AUNT CORNY:—You are surprised, I make no doubt, to see my letter dated at Richmond. When I wrote to father, the other day, I did not think of going home so soon; but, to tell you the truth, when once I began to think of it I grew so impatient to see you all that I was not long in calling on the president and asking him for a month's furlough. He demurred, as a matter of course, but concluded his somewhat paternal, though unnecessary, exhortations by giving me the usual printed permission, with his sign manual. I was rather glad to get it, inasmuch as I had resolved to leave in defiance of the whole corporation, if they had been (I was sure they would not be) so unwise as to refuse me.

"'Well, I paid my bills and sent my luggage on board the boat. The next morning I was in New York, the next in Washington, and the next (Sunday) in Richmond. I attended Dr. D——'s church. You will think me very romantic, I am sure, my dear aunt, but I must here confess to you why I have been tarrying these four days at

Richmond. I happened to hear, in an adjoining pew, oh! *such* a voice! and——'

"There's nothing so bewitching as a fine voice. Poor Henry had the sweetest I ever heard," interposed Aunt Corny, and she sighed.

—"and on looking round I saw a face which has haunted me ever since. Don't think me crazy, my dear aunt——'

"I don't," ejaculated my aunt.

—"but I can't rest for that same calm face. I have since met her, but once she was in a carriage, and there was not even a hackman or a street-sweeper to inquire of, and the next time (yesterday) she was just getting on board the Curtis Peck steamer—the only boat, by the by, which was going to Norfolk during the day. I spare you a description of the feverish, fidgety temper in which I have passed this interminable day. Last evening, to fill up my cup of disappointment, I called at Madam Stewart's to see Kate, and—will you believe it?—was told that she had left Richmond for home. I was the more surprised at this as I wrote to her a few days ago that I should soon give her a call.

"The two ladies, then, must have left in the same boat. Ten to one Kate knows her, for had she been much in society I should have found some clue to her name and residence. I am in a furor of excitement, and scarcely know what I write. That girl must be mine; if not, why then you may as well bespeak a cell, a keeper, and a strait-jacket for

"Your affectionate nephew,

"ROBT. SMALLWOOD.

“P. S.—I shall be home almost as soon as my letter. My love to all.’

“Why, Aunt Corny,” said I, “it must have been Kate herself.”

“Precisely, Gregory ; but read this and decide.”

I opened the letter.

“RICHMOND, *April 1st*, 1849.

“MY DEAREST AUNT CORNY:—Did you think I had forgotten you? If so, you were never farther from the truth in your life, though I confess that a whole fortnight has passed without my writing you a single line. Pray forgive me! I have been so busy reviewing and getting ready to go home. Madame Frille has been fitting my dresses (I’ve a load of satin to show you), and really I *could* not well find time to write to you. Indeed, I only write *now* to tell you that you may expect me the day after to-morrow (if nothing happens), and to tell you as well as the words can say it, how truly and affectionately I am

“Yours always,

“KATE.

“P. S.—Remember me in all kindness to Uncle John, and be sure you kiss Molly forty times for me. Remember me, too, to my excellent old *mammy* (may she live forever!) to Army, and all the rest. I believe I was nigh making a new conquest the other day. A rawish, book-eating sort of gentleman stared at me unmercifully in church. Then I met him as I was riding out, and, as he seems to be watching my movements, I am hoping to complete the conquest on board the Curtis Peck, that

is, should he be silly enough to follow me. To say the truth, I was rather pleased than otherwise, and—but I'll talk with you about it when I get home.

"I am dying to show you my new bonnet. What with my curls and new dresses, and new bonnet, I intend to be irresistible. So pray warn the beaux in time. For the world, don't show this letter. Burn it, won't you? There's a dear good aunt, and be commended to

'The gentleness of all the gods!'

"K."

"What say you?" asked my aunt.

"Clear as the day!"

"*Isn't it?*"

"It certainly *is*."

"And he'll marry her?"

"Not a doubt of it."

"And we shall be *so* happy! I—I——"

And here my excellent Aunt Corny sobbed aloud, and I left her alone.

CHAPTER XIII.

A SABBATH IN THE COUNTRY.

JOB. "Brother Jacob, don't use profane language!"

OLD JOB AND JACOB GRAY.

"Leave patience to the gods! for I am human."

SIR BULWER LITTON'S "RICHELIEU."

"Dew yew see that 'ere nigger?" asked the professor, as I met him on the piazza the next morning.

"Yes; why?"

"What's his name?"

"Fred."

"I thought so. I've ben watchin' him. What does he *dew*?"

"He makes a fire for the colonel in the morning; goes to the post-office sometimes; and now and then brings a pail of water."

"Wal, when I come down this morning he was watchin' that 'ere big dog. What's his name?"

"Danger."

"Twig the kink in his tail. Queer, ain't it?"

"Quite so."

"I wish *I* had jest sich a dog."

"You may have *him*."

"I may?"

"You may."

"I'm obleeged tew ye. As I was sayin', when I come down I seen Fred watchin' this 'ere dog. He looked at him a minnit, and then he haw-hawed right aout, and ses he, 'Don't he *tote* his tail grand?' "

"The word *tote*, then, is new to you?"

"Wal, ya-a-s. Can't say I ever hearn it to Steven-town. However, I was a goin' to say that I watched him as he was creepin' along with a han'ful o' chips, blowin' his fingers as if 'twas Jinniuary. And ses I, 'Fed,' says I, 'haow old are ye? 'Bout forty?' An' ses he, 'Yehzur!' Wal, now, I'm disposed to b'lieve the boy; for though he ain't bigger 'an a quart o' cider eenamost dranked up, he must be powerful old to move so tarnal slow. It beats all natur. Did he ever hev the rewmatics 'as yew know on?"

"No."

"Wal, I don't know as the boy's tew blame. Everybody a'most goes jest so; white and black. Creepin' along as ef they was jest goin' tew die. It frets me tew death. Did yew ever see me walkin' so?"

"I believe not."

"Yaou're *shewer* not. I dew love to see a feller move as ef he hadn't departed this life. Jest look at that feller comin' up tew the gate. In a sulky, I b'lieve. Ya-a-s, he *is*, an' leanin' one elbow on the railin'; leanin' over like a jigger on the flats."

The professor's eloquence was here interrupted by the arrival of my friend Haynes, who had; in fact, acquired the very lounging and indolent attitude of driving which is so common in the South. He had come, he said, to invite me to go to a meeting near Windsor; and *had come* early in order that we might drive to Major

Wood's to breakfast. He added that Miss Jeffreys was probably at the major's, as she had gone the day before to Windsor. Such, at least, he said, was her intention. The reader will readily conclude that I needed little solicitation. The professor declined going; assigning as his excuse the threatening symptoms of a spell of easterly weather, and assuring us that an east wind was "death on the rheumatiz."

A pleasant ride had we that quiet, beautiful Sabbath morning. The warm sunshine of an April day; the songs of a thousand birds; the balmy air; the earnest, burning, thought-waking conversation into which I was gradually led by my companion; all served to impress the time and the scene lastingly on my memory. We fell to conversing, somehow, upon the varieties of temperament, and I believe I congratulated him on his apparent advantage of me in coolness and self-possession. He laughed slightly as he replied, "Coolness? self-possession? Why, Mr. Seaworthy, impulse itself is not more mercurial. Your remark, as well as our destination and the day, brings to my recollection an incident of my younger days that may amuse you, and serve to while away a half hour of our ride.

"Mr. Lewis Bugby (may his shadow never be less!) was my classmate and chum at — College. There was nothing strictly homœopathic in the mixture; no sympathy; no affinity: electric repulsion, rather. As I have intimated, I have been from infancy impulsive; eager, earnest, impatient, restless, ever-moving. A regiment of adjectives would give you no adequate idea of my temperament in this regard. Young Rapid is considered by the critics a caricature. He was Dutch

in his imperturbable calmness in comparison with me. As you see, I am never five minutes at rest. That is the reason why I so hate this dull, lifeless, soulless, nerveless monotony of country life. But for my pen and the duties of the school-room I could not live. You call the northerners cold, passionless, unimpressible; but I have yet to find blood in Carolina that so courses in its channels as mine. I have even had some thoughts of a trip to the gold mines, that I might thus be tolerably certain of a year or two of activity. Had I the physical development for the purpose, I would enlist in the dragoons. Enough, however. And now to my story.

Mr. Lewis Bugby (I am ready to make affirmation that nobody has ever before called him anything but Lewis) was my opposite in almost every trait of character. If he were in the China Sea, that is to say, as far opposite to me as he could well be, I undertake to say that he would climb—What's the highest mast of a ship?"

"The mainskysail-mast, usually."

"Well, then, he would climb to the truck, as they call it, of the mainskysail-mast, in order to be somewhat more emphatically opposed to everything and everybody on this continent. I never knew him to consent to anything or to agree with anybody. I never knew him to become excited. A hotel at which we were staying (he occupied a room opposite to mine) caught fire. I awoke him, with much difficulty, however, for he was opposed to waking at all. He did not leave his chamber until he had adjusted his cravat and breastpin, and re-laced his waistcoat. I am of opinion that a decided act of volition would have cost him his life. He was accustomed to say that he meant to 'take the world easy,' and

there is not a shadow of a doubt, to my thinking, that he was sincere. Then, he was obstinate. Swine and mules have acquired a sort of family notoriety for being somewhat tenacious and unyielding, but, trust me, they are models of soft compliance when compared with my friend and chum, Mr. Lewis Bugby. But I weary you, and, after all, I have given you no adequate idea of the unexcitable individual in question.

"It so happened that he had two sisters, as unlike him as black is unlike white. That is to say, they were charming girls, the one sixteen, the other eighteen years of age. Miss Lossy (such was the family diminutive for Eliza) was an especial favorite of mine. I went home with Lewis, in the first term of my junior year, to spend a fortnight of our vacation. The ladies were absent on a visit. It was expected, however, that they would be at the house of Mr. Furness, a friend of Mr. Bugby, senior, the next day, Saturday. Mrs. Bugby said that they would accompany Mr. Furness to a neighboring church. It was agreed, therefore, that we should visit Mr. Smith, a bachelor friend of Mr. Bugby, junior, and go thence, on Sabbath morning, to church. By this arrangement we should have the pleasure of a night with the hospitable and intelligent Mr. Smith, and meet the ladies at church.

"We arrived at Mr. Smith's residence just at night-fall, and were as well entertained as could be expected in a bachelor establishment. That is to say, there was no singing, unless the deliberate immolation of divers songs might, in courtesy, be so called; no dancing, no one of the thousand nameless and indescribable attractions of ladies' society; the jokes were not of the most

refined, the stories were shocking, and we went at last yawningly to bed, something the worse for a very hearty supper and a few glasses of wine.

“I remember thinking, as I grew drowsy, of the next morning’s ride at the expense of my friend Bugby’s buggy and bays, of handing the ladies from the carriage to the church-door, of a ride home with them after service, and a delightful evening with them and the family of Mr. Furness. . I was debating what I might venture to say to Miss Lossy, resolving myself into a committee of the whole on the state of our union, when Old Somnus moved the previous question, and I was asleep. I dreamed of Lossy Bugby (Phœbus! what a name! but then I could change it!) I had, in my dream, walked with the fair one to the shades of a beautiful grove. A storm gathered. The sky grew dark as night, the lightning flashed, the wind howled through the pines, the thunder rolled fitfully through the heavens. We were beneath a huge oak. Miss Bugby—so it appeared to me in my dream—shrunk timidly, yet trustfully, towards me (your confiding girls always carry a bachelor’s heart by storm); my arm somehow encircled her waist, and I was just murmuring the low, husky words of a ‘first passionate love,’ when methought I was struck by lightning and hurled to the ground.

“When at length I recovered my senses so far as to remember where I was and to know that I was awake, I found one arm very affectionately thrown around the immortal Lewis Bugby! The lightning stroke was none other than the weight and momentum of Mr. Smith’s Newfoundland dog, who had taken the usual liberty to

jump upon the bed. My friend Bugby's snore accounted most satisfactorily for the thunder, and the flickering of the expiring candle told the rest.

"The next morning Mr. Smith took Mr. Lewis Bugby to the barns and fields, and initiated him into the mysteries of guano, clover, ground-peas, coffee-peas, and cow-peas. I declined going. While they were absent, our bachelor friend prevailed on my friend Bugby to spend the day with him instead of going to church, referring him, however, to me. It would never do in the world, I thought, to decide the matter for Bugby, or to urge him to go to church on my own account; I therefore left the matter to him, whereupon, after a brief consultation, Mr. Lewis Bugby decided to stay. I could have cried for vexation. I took no pains to conceal my uneasiness, in the hope that he would change his purpose and go to church. I fussed, walked, hinted, sighed—what not? But my chum philosophically ignored my misery. He read the last number of the county newspaper, advertisements and all, smoked, yawned, and finally retired for a nap. I seized my hat, went to the woods, and there groaned and stamped in sheer vexation.

"I went back to the house. Both my friends were asleep. I read the papers. I pored for two hours over Frost's Picture History of the War with Mexico. A black baby squalled up and down the chromatic scale. I called for a glass of wine, and wrote some very pathetic verses for the newspaper, for the particular benefit and behoof of Miss Lossy Bugby. At last my friends awoke. We dined, and just at sunset we drove away on our way to the residence of Mr. Furness. When we

arrived there the servant informed us that the ladies had just left for home. And again I groaned.

“‘What’s the matter, friend Haynes?’ asked my friend Bugby. ‘Got a colic?’

“‘No!’ replied I, and I did not speak again until we got home.”

We had whiled away the time pleasantly, and when my friend Haynes had finished the story, we were in sight of the church. There was but one service, and at one o’clock we set out on our return. As we rode past Dr. Jeffrey’s gate, at Underwood, Mr. Haynes bade me good evening.

“By the by,” added he, “we must take the professor to the big meeting next week.”

“Such is our intention. It is already agreed upon. Good evening.”

“Good evening, Mr. Seaworthy. Come and see us to-morrow.”

“I thank you.”

And I rode homeward.

CHAPTER XIV.

COURT-DAY.

"Good, my liege! for JUSTICE

All place a temple, and all season summer!
For fifteen years, while in *these* hands dwelt empire,
The meanest craftsman, the obscurest vassal,
The very *leper*, shrinking from the sun,
Though loathed by Charity, might ask for justice:
Not with the fawning tone and crawling mien
Of some I see around you; knights and princes
Kneeling for favors, but erect, and loud,
As MEN that ask men's rights."

RICHELIEU.

MONDAY passed quietly. I awoke the next morning in a listless, dreamy humor, and sauntered drowsily towards the lot. I have omitted to say, I believe, that the first of the buildings in that inclosure was a long, low, almost piratical-looking shed—a gaunt, moss-grown unsubstantial structure, better adapted to please the eye of an antiquary than to serve any of its legitimate purposes. It had, nevertheless, instead of the crumbling dilapidated air of age, rather the labored erectness and vigor of a veteran soldier or sailor, to whom erectness and vigor have become matters of habit. It stood conspicuously in its

"Looped and windowed raggedness,"

in full view from the piazza, and during many an hour have I dreamily scanned its grim wrinkles with wondering queries as to its history. Underneath it was a very motley gathering of carriages, farming utensils—what not? Old hats, that might very readily suggest the idea (the quaintness of the conceit I believe to be of modern origin) that there had been bricks in them; old shoes so old as to make it not at all improbable that they had been, centuries ago, on a pilgrimage to the holy sepulchre. Then there were axes, rakes, hoes, harrows, ploughs, a sulky and a carriage, wearing “an interesting look of better days.” On divers pins, mistily peering forth from nebulous cobwebs, hung here an old side-saddle, which was old in my Aunt Corny’s teens, and there a dilapidated harness, long past the possibility of any benefit of extreme unction. There, too, was old Peter Law’s cart, its head meekly downcast, the shafts resting upon the ground. Its wheels were most plentifully coated with dry mud. It stood in a sort of resigned quiet and repose, as if it had outlived the gayeties of its younger days, and wearing a cadaverous look betokening decay, either from age or rough usage—perhaps from both; but my opinion leans towards the chronic character of the affection. At any rate, when old Peter Law roused it that morning from its slumbers, and harnessed Jim, a whitey-brown, time-defying old mule (Peter assured me that he “could kick like a four-year-old”), I had serious fears for the consequences of so abrupt a breaking in upon its repose. Jim was soon inside its well-polished shafts, and started at the first cluck of his dusky driver. The cart tottered reluctantly forth with the un-

steady gait of a man who has deliberately made up his mind that he

“—— won't go home till morning,”

sending forth to the startled ear of the day a sharp, shrill, complaining shriek, betraying, as I thought, some organic ailment of *long standing*. Its axle was thrust ungracefully through the hubs, for all the world like the thin legs of an ague-stricken urchin through breeches long out-grown.

As I passed the shed, I heard the voice of Professor Matters. He was conversing, it soon appeared, with my friend Buckthorn's overseer, who had come to the plantation on some errand or other to me unknown. As their conversation was not in the low tone of confidence, I was not guilty, as it appears to me, of any very flagrant breach of politeness in listening to it.

“Yaou goin' tu the big meetin' day arter to-morrer?”

“Yehzur, ben thinkin' 'bout guoin.' You're guoin', ain't ye?”

“Wal, ya-a-s; thought I shud.”

“You'd better go. Mrs. Blossom's to be thar; a young widder; lot's o' bricks; peertest thing in these diggins. She's a leetle *beyend*, now I tell *you*.”

“Yaou 'pear tu think somethin' on her yaourself.”

“Bless your soul! I've done got married mor'n three year ago; got three of the tallest childern, prehaps! A leetle *beyend*! You must go an' drap yourself all 'round her. Only six childern. You couldn't do better. She's got a heap o' beaux tho', and you'd better be up and doin' to-rectly.”

“Where'll we git dinner?”

"O! we al'ays carries dinner, or else a snack. Lots o' bacon, an' hoe-cake, an' barbecue, an' chicken, an' fresh doin's."

"Wal, I guess I must go. Yaou goin' tu hev a cistun over tu yaour house?"

"Yes. Uncle Baldy said so yesterday. Good maw-nin'!"

"Hold yer hosses a minnit! What kind of a meetin' is this? Dew the Mormins or Quakers, or who——"

"Let's me see. The Baptisses hed it last time. It's the Methodists. Good mawnin'."

"Good mornin' tu ye. That feller's from Virginny," muttered the professor; "he says *thar* like a natyve. I conceit as how *I* must be *thar*, and see that 'ere widder. Forty thousan' they say. Don't know but what I might change my 'pinions 'bout slavery, ef I had fifty or sixty niggers. However, Fatty—Bless my soul! I wonder ef anybody heerd me call myself Fatty? I don't think that ere 'll go daown. No tellin' tho', tell I see the widder."

At this stage of the professor's soliloquy, I made a cautious but somewhat precipitate retreat. He soon followed, and when breakfast was announced, was romping with Molly in the piazza. It was not seven o'clock when we rose from the table and took our departure.

"Yaou don't 'pear to like the northerners much, du yaou, colonel?" said the professor, as we rode away.

"Like them? Most certainly I do. I admire their energy, economy, and perseverance. I admire their ingenuity, and I am ready to make every possible allowance for their interference in our local affairs. I grant them what I claim for myself—liberty of thought and speech."

“Wal, but people generally in this part o’ the country don’t seem to like us. They ain’t nothin’, as far as I’ve observed, that comes so bitter like out of a southerner’s mouth as the word ‘Yankee.’ There is Uncle Baldy, now——”

“O, I grant that there is some ill feeling, but it is mostly attributable to the dishonest tricks of sharpers and peddlers. We are a frank, open, unsuspicious people. We are hospitable to everybody, and I regret the necessity of saying to you that our hospitality is sometimes abused. You mention my neighbor Buckthorn. A year ago he bought one of your Yankee clocks, and paid five dollars for it. About two weeks ago another clock-peddler came along with a kind of clocks which he said were much better. He offered them for eight dollars, and said he would take the old one at two dollars in part pay. My friend Buckthorn had occasion to go to Windsor the next day, and lo! he finds his old clock thrown away in the bushes by the roadside. The peddler, it seems, sold his clock at such a profit as to be able to throw the other away!”

“Ya-a-s, an’ made fifty per cent. clear, arter all. I was in the clock line once myself. Know all ’beout it.”

“This is one among many, Professor Matters. Such things are not very well calculated to produce good feeling.”

“No,” replied the professor, musingly. “Hello! who’s comin’?”

We looked back. The new-comers were Dr. Jeffreys, Uncle Baldy, and his son Harry, of whose return we had not heard, Squire Butterson, and Mr. Sayles.

Their arrival was the signal for an animated conversation, which served very considerably to shorten the way.

We were among the earliest to arrive. The hotel was thronged with waiters who were in readiness to receive the guests. I found mine host and his lady, both of whom at once recognized me, bustling asthmatically about in the work of preparation. Mr. Dawson was filling the sugar-drawers with lump-sugar, while Mrs. Dawson was as nearly ubiquitous and out of breath as it was possible for her to be. She assured me that she was "just ready to drap." She had been, she said, as busy as a bee for the last three days in making preparations. A glimpse of the pantry where meats, pies, puddings, cakes—what not?—were piled like shot in an ordnance-yard, fully confirmed the statement.

"Had I ever been at Court in the country?" she asked.

"No."

"Well, then, I should see sights!" she exclaimed; and she waddled away with a sigh of exhaustion.

Anon came the people in carts, in carriages, on horseback, on foot. I saw the professor in an agony of laughter as he watched the advent of two men in a cart which was drawn by a single steer. Such horses; thin as the Cumæan Sybil, who could only be recognized by her voice; consumptive, asthmatic, shadowy, dilapidated, uncombed, unwashed, unfed; despair in their long, sharp faces. The carts were in similar variety. The yard, however, was fast filling up with horses and carriages that would do credit to any part of the country. Among the arrivals was that of "a show," as it was called; the same being a deformed dwarf, whose picture roughly

sketched on canvas was quite enough to disgust me. It proved, however, to be one of the lions of the day. In one corner of the public room was a book-peddler, demure, spectacled, sanctified-looking. In another corner a saddler exposed his goods, and in another a shoemaker was similarly employed. Not far from the door of the court-house was a covered cart laden with oysters. There was a fire near it, and a rude deal-table, to which, ever and anon, thin, long-haired, ague-blended men, with limitless shirt collars, gathered tumultuously for the ambrosial stew. Fips, ninepences and quarters were thrown recklessly, almost furiously down, with the desperate air of people who are resolved to have what is technically called "a bender." The professor seemed perfectly at home. Whenever and wherever I met him, he was exhibiting a piece of hardened cement.

Not far from the oyster cart was a sort of tent, if such it could be called, it being simply a sheet fastened at each corner to a pole, and thus serving to shelter from the rays of the sun an ample stock of cakes and candy and nuts. In another part of the yard a man was selling a horse at auction. The doors of the court-house as well as the walls were covered with notices, written in every imaginable style of penmanship, and in the most hardy defiance of all the rules of orthography and punctuation.

And then the dress! Coats that were venerable when swallow-tails were young; hats that might represent the progress of hat-architecture since the flood; caps of fur, cloth, leather, silk, and materials nondescript; nankeen in its glaring, undisguised, unmitigated, remorseless yellowness, made up in Turkish capaciousness; bonnets

from the height and size and antiquity of Noah's Ark, with something of the picturesque modernness of a Chinese junk or a Dutch frigate of the old school. Perhaps the Egyptian war-chariot is a better standard of comparison. Then there were umbrellas which I will not undertake to say were of Chinese or Botany Bay manufacture, but which would do no violence to the remotest of umbrella probabilities—due regard being had to their chronology.

The people were out in force. There were greetings hearty and without number. There were grave consultations on all sorts of topics: the weather, the compromise, the committee of thirteen, the Contoy prisoners, the last message, California, Utah, the dissolution of the Union, while

“News much older than their ale went round,”

as unblushingly as if it were the last telegraphic dispatch. Apple-brandey was as water for abundance, and barrels were as fountains of beer. Hard-handed toil regaled himself on gingerbread and stewed oysters. Old Times stalked unconsciously along, jostling the newest and gaudiest robes of fashion and novelty.

It was warm that day. The landlady meekly and in resignation rolled her eyes heavenward, while mine host, “as subject to heat as butter,” seemed ready to evaporate. The dogs sank wearily and pantingly down, stretching themselves to their full length with an evident conviction that all flesh is grass in hot weather.

At dinner-time a crowd was gathered at the door of the dining-room. When at length it was unfastened, there was a general rush, on the tide of which mine host

was borne along, to the irremediable detriment of a new and somewhat tight pair of Sunday breeches. The table was loaded. There was beef by the half-ox, whole hecatombs of fowls, vegetables innumerable. After dinner came the speeches from some of the political candidates, and at the instigation of Dr. Jeffreys, Professor Matters was called upon for a speech upon his new system of hydrology. The substance thereof may, perchance, yet be given to the world.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the crowd began to disperse, and we were among the first to depart. The professor informed us that he had been very successful, having closed a bargain for no less than five cisterns.

"And to construct them you will require several weeks," observed my uncle.

"Ya-a-s. An' what's better than that, colonel, I shall hev all I can dew for a year, mebbby tew years. Yaou Grief!"

"Sah!"

"What time 'll we git hum?"

"'Bout a hour by sun, maussa."

"You are not going to leave us, professor?" I asked.

"No; but ef we're going tew muster to-morrer, I've got some letters to write and some other dockyments to fix."

"Drive on, Grief," said my uncle. "So you are likely to be -with us through the summer, Professor Matters?"

"Wal, I don't know 'xactly. I'm most afeard to stay here among these 'ere swamps. I wouldn't have the yaller fever for all the cisterns in the world."

"We never have the yellow fever here."

"'Beout the same thing, tho'; yaou hev that 'ere cussed bilious and the fever 'n' agur—scuse me for swearin'—and I'd 'beout as lieve hev the yaller!"

"You need run no risk of having a fever at all."

"Sho! Haow du yaou mean?"

"Give us the pleasure of your company at Nag's Head."

"Where's that?"

"A summer resort on the sea-shore. We shall go about the tenth of July. You need be at no expense if you will accept of such fare as we can give you, and you will meet many of our wealthiest planters, who will very likely give you an opportunity to make your system of hydrology very extensively known. What say you?"

"Say? Why, I'll *dew* it, sure's the 'Postles!"

"It is so understood, then. I think you will find Nag's Head a pleasant place to pass the dog-days. Hurry on, Grief!"

"Ya-a-s, maussa. De grays ben gwan home now, for sure." And Grief performed his most artistic flourish with the whip, urging the petted horses into something very like a brisk trot.

It was not yet sunset when we approached the outer gate at Cypress Shore. Little Molly, accompanied by her maid Linda, had come out to meet us. She was very speedily nestling in the folds of my uncle's cloak—the evenings were still chilly—and was rewarded by a doting hug, which she seemed to relish with infinite satisfaction. We were soon at the door. Aunt Corny bustled about with her usual activity. She commissioned Polly Feggins to see to the building of fires in the chambers,

and hurried Hetty, the cook, in her preparations for supper.

"Do look at the sound!" she exclaimed. And she led the way to the piazza. It was indeed a beautiful sight. There was not a ripple on its broad surface. To the right were the mouths of the Roanoke and the Cashie. They were barely discernible among the low cypresses that lined the shore. The light boat lay motionless at her moorings, while the notes of a song came from her deck across the water. The little steamer Fox was gliding past; and here and there were schooners becalmed. The rays of the setting sun fell upon their white sails, giving them the appearance of being much nearer to us than they really were. On the lawn were half a score of calves and the colonel's merinoes; and these were soon set scampering by the frolicsome gallop of the horses just let loose from the carriage.

"Hello!" exclaimed the professor, suddenly, "there's a sail-boat!"

"Where?" asked my Aunt Corny.

"There by that p'int. Tew, by the great horn spune! Both rowin'. Why in natur don't they lower down the sails?"

"They are expecting a breeze, perhaps," said my uncle, adjusting a ship's glass as he spoke. "And there it comes now."

"Ya-a-s, an' a powerful breeze it is tew. They's women in them small boats."

"Maybe it's sister Kate!" exclaimed Molly, clapping her hands.

"I believe it *is* Kate!" said my uncle, steadyng the

glass against one of the columns. "It is. She's standing up, waving her bonnet—My God! she's overboard!"

My uncle and the professor started with me for the shore. Molly and my Aunt Corny shrieked, and followed us.

"There's a feller jumped arter her!" exclaimed the professor. "Hold on! hold on!" shouted he, as if he thought his voice might reach them. "Human natur! I b'lieve they're both on 'em drowned. No they ain't! There they come tu the top o' the water! Hold on! Hold on! Strike aout! Yaou're a trump anyhow! Safe! Safe! by the peowers! O, Childern of Isril! haow my heart beats!"

The lady was indeed safe. She was lifted into the boat just as we reached the shore of the sound. When my Aunt Corny with Molly, the housekeeper, and half a dozen servants came up, the boatmen had shipped their oars, and were pulling with might and main directly towards us. On they came. The water foamed beneath the bows, and in a few minutes the light, beautiful boat grated upon the sand.

"My dearest uncle! My Aunt Corny! Molly, you rogue!" were some of the exclamations as Kate Smallwood sprang upon the beach, dripping wet and shivering with cold. Bob Smallwood followed in like predicament. My uncle had recourse to his bandanna, and looked very intently towards the mouth of the Roanoke; for what particular purpose he never informed me. My Aunt Corny sobbed hysterically, and sunk down upon the sand.

"Come! come!" said my uncle, gruffly; "we must get to the house. Sister Corny, don't be silly! Come

on, all of you. Bob! you young scamp, how came you to let her fall overboard? You'd better have gone to California."

"I——"

"There now!" exclaimed Kate, interrupting the angry Bob; "not another word, or I turn about and go back."

"Well, well! let it go, then. We have you safe and sound."

A brisk walk brought us very speedily to the house. The wet garments were soon exchanged for dry ones; the fires blazed "broad and bright and high," and a bowl of my Aunt Corny's best hot egg-nogg honored the arrival. Professor Matters was duly made acquainted with the new-comers. In the evening, Dr. Jeffreys, his lady and daughter, with the Buckthorns, paid us a visit. A substantial supper smoked upon the board. The egg-nogg and a delicious dish of coffee accomplished their mission, and after supper Grief was ordered to bring his violin. A set was formed; and then to the notes of the Republican Reel did we have a right merry dance of the old school. No lazy lifeless dragging of listless feet through a moping figure; but a real, springing, pulse-stirring, heart-cheering jig. Madam Buckthorn led out the reluctant professor. To him dancing seemed a business, not an amusement. Never yet have I seen heels so lifted, arms so swung, pigeon-wings so cut—in pieces. The skirts of his long, blue, swallow-tail coat were in sympathetic agitation. Madam Buckthorn whispered his name to Kate, and in peals of laughter the dance was ended.

Then there was a promenade in the piazza, in which

Helen Jeffrey's arm was within my own, while Bob was explaining to his cousin Kate, as he afterwards told me, how he fell in love with her at Richmond. It was late when we retired, and for me there was no sleep until it was well-nigh day. O! those days at Cypress Shore!

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail
That brings our friends up from the under world,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge,
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

• • • • •

"Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love and wild with all regret,
O death in life, the days that are no more."

CHAPTER XV.

LOVE PASSAGES.

HER. "What wins a *widow* will not lose a maid."

LOVE'S SACRIFICE.

"When Florio speaks, what virgin could withstand,
If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand?"

RAPE OF THE LOCK.

I FOUND Professor Matters to be an early riser. Habitually rising at daybreak, I do not remember his sleeping later than myself. I noticed that Grief had accommodated his habits to those of the professor, and that he invariably blacked his boots and supplied him with water at night; whereas, for everybody else, he performed those offices in the morning. When I rose on the following morning, Wednesday, I raised my window to enjoy the fresh air, and proceeded to dress. While thus engaged, I heard the well-known voice of the professor accosting some person whom I could not see.

"Good mornin'!" said he, in a loud, hearty, ringing tone. "Long life tew ye! haou du yaou du?"

"I'm quite well, I'm 'bliged to ye, Professor Matters; how do you do?"

"Wal, tol'ble. Goin' tew muster?"

"No. We're busy now with the crop, an' I don't think I can leave. I s'pose you'll keep on and see the

widder. You can have a look at the muster as you go through Windsor, and so go to the Widder Blossom's to dinner."

"Ah!" said the professor, despondingly, "I'm afeard that 'ere blossom 'll never be gathered by me."

"No knowin', sir, no knowin'. I've seen onlikelier matters bud, and blossom, and bear fruit. Go ahead man, and take her through!"

"What du yaou mean by takin' her through?"

"Why, courtin' her to be sure."

"We call it sparkin', to Steventown. I think I'll go."

"So do. You'll find the widder *some*, now I tell you."

And the overseer (our neighbor Buckthorn's) departed. On going to the piazza, I met the professor as he was ascending the steps.

"Good mornin', Mr. Seaworthy," said he.

"Good morning, Professor Matters. I hope you are very well this morning."

"Ya-a-as, tol'ble I thank ye. But I shall git sick ef I stay here."

"Why?"

"Why, layin' still and dewin' nothin'. I can't see how these ere southeners live an' so little to dew. But there's one thing about 'em that I dew like. They're the most hospitalest people alive, I du b'lieve. Now I never seen the colonel until last week, and though I've been here so long with my hoss and cart, he won't take a cent. I offered tu pay him yesterday, and he ses to me, ses he, kind o' huffy-like, 'I don't keep tavern,' ses he. 'You won't take nothin?' ses I. 'No,' ses he ;

'of course I won't. You're free to stay as long as you like, only never speak about pay again.' Wal, yesterday, up there to court, when I come to ask the tavern-keeper for my bill—'It's paid,' ses he.

" 'Who paid it?' ses I.

" 'Colonel Smallwood.'

" 'Git aout!' ses I; 'you're jokin'.'

" 'Fact!' ses he, 'sure's you're bawn!'"

"You must remember, professor," I replied, "that the population here is not as dense as it is in Maine. Property is held in few hands, and you have only met with ordinary hospitality."

"Wal, now, in my part o' the country they is mighty few people 'ud hev kept me so."

"Very likely. Not, however, because they are not hospitable. It would not do there. It would be literally impossible. Here we see but few visitors, strangers very rarely, and my uncle is only showing you the same hospitality which you will meet with almost everywhere in the south."

Our conversation was interrupted by the breakfast-bell. A merry breakfast had we. My cousin Kate was looking more beautiful than I had ever seen her. She had the most beautiful head in the world. It was a luxury to you merely to look at its faultless outline and the rich hair that so profusely covered it. The colonel need have no fear of Bob's California scheme, thought I, as I saw that young gentleman under the witchery of her smile, and my Aunt Corny looked significantly at me as she saw the two in conversation. It would have been difficult for a disinterested observer to say which of the two ladies was the more beautiful, as Kate and Helen

Jeffreys sat side by side. Mr. and Mrs. Buckthorn, as well as the laughter-loving lieutenant, Mr. Henry Buckthorn, quizzed the professor unmercifully (in which they were aided by Dr. and Madam Jeffreys) about the widow, and we rose from the table in a war of laughter occasioned by little Molly, who asked, very demurely (I suspected Madam Buckthorn's agency in the matter), "if Uncle Fatty was going to see Mithith Bloththum?"

It was at least nine o'clock before the professor and myself left Cypress Shore for the residence of Mistress Blossom. It may as well be said here, confidentially to the reader, that that lady, although she had many warm friends and admirers, had not altogether escaped the suspicion of having some native acerbity, in spite of a very agreeable and almost perpetual smile. In one respect, too, she was likely to suit the professor, for she was remarkably fond of dogs, a huge cur, very appropriately named Growler, occupying the post of prime favorite. For the professor, he now habitually took with him the large dog which had been given him some days before. Indeed, he was with us on the present occasion.

An easy drive of something like two hours and a half brought us to Windsor. The military were already in full feather on parade. There may have been some fifteen mounted, and possibly fifty in the ranks of the infantry. I have, before and since that day, seen many military companies and evolutions, but assuredly there was never anything to match those which met my astonished gaze on that memorable morning. The company of horse had no music whatever, neither had the infantry "the peal of the alarming drum" to inspire

them with the enthusiasm of military glory. No fife pierced the ears of peaceful citizens ; but, instead thereof, a shrill, squeaking, squealing, screaming, broken-winded clarionet. There is no feeling, as far as my observation goes, so speedily and furiously excited as martial enthusiasm. It was rich to me to see the erect frame, the prominent chest, and the military stride, as well as the flashing eyes and distended nostrils of men who were entrusted with such formidable weapons as canes, umbrellas, and superannuated muskets, when I knew that "old peach" and the notes of a heathenish clarionet were the prime instigators. I have not the least doubt that, in the enthusiasm of the hour, that company would have volunteered as a forlorn hope to take Gibraltar by storm.

"Wal," exclaimed the professor, as we rode out of town, "I thought I had seen all the varieties of the hew-man specie! I've traveled some in my day. I was to Washin'ton when old Ginerel Harrison was ina'gurated, and when he was buried. I've ben tu Novy Scoshy an' the West Indies, and to South Ameriky, not to speak of Georgy and Texas, but that 'ere military parade bangs the bush. I was mighty nigh offerin' the cap'n my hat."

"It is fortunate for you that you did not," I replied ;
"Mrs. Blossom would never have seen you."

"Wal, I guess she wouldn't ha' cried. Whose niggers is them 'ere plantin' corn?"

"I am unable to say."

"Just twig them fellers, now. Du yaou s'pose that it's cheaper to hev them than to hire white men?"

"I confess that I sometimes doubt it."

"Wal, so du I. I've been obsarvin' 'em, an' I

b'lieve I could dew more in that 'ere field with ten good, stout, actyve Yankee boys—yes, or Irishmen—than with twenty-five niggers. They are so 'mazin' lazy and slow. They don't airn their grub, some on 'em. I wouldn't have some on 'em as a gift. They're al'ays sick, they have 'a mighty bad agy,' they 'feels bad all over,' they 'kep along great while, and didn't gin out till dis mawn-in'.' That's the way they talk. They go creepin' along as if they had the rheumatics in every bone in their body. I could make a pair of butes while old Peter's blackin' mine, an' I could clear an acre o' land while he is makin' me a fire. I git all out o' patience with 'em."

"Not with all of them?"

"No, not all. There's Grief, now ; for all he's got sich an awful name, he's a first rate feller. He knows eena-most as much as a white man. He'd make a livin' anywhere ; but I du b'lieve a right smart chance on 'em, as you say here, would starver rather'n to work. I don't see how in natur' yaou hev so much patience with 'em. I should ha' quilted some on 'em forty times, now I tell yaou, when the colonel don't say a word."

"Do you know that our severest overseers are from your region of country?"

"Wal, so they du say ; an' I've no doubt on't. I'll be darned ef I didn't quilt 'em, ef they didn't move a little more as if they was alive. Whose house is that 'ere?"

"That is the residence of Mrs. Blossom."

"Du tell!"

Here the professor took off his hat, ran his fingers hastily and anxiously through his hair ; drew the locks

over the bald spot on the top of his head, and adjusted his enormous triangular dickey. There were two horses standing, saddled, at the rack; from which I inferred that the dashing widow might already have visitors on the same errand as that of the professor. A smiling negro met us as we alighted, and we entered the house. I observed that the professor took his venerable overcoat with him, and suggested to him that the servant would see it properly taken care of. He declined trusting it out of his sight, however, and actually carried it into the hall. The servant who met us at the door ushered us into the drawing-room, where, as I had expected, there were two middle aged gentlemen awaiting the advent of the widow. She was not long in making her appearance. My reception was most cordial. Question after question did Madam Blossom ask me concerning all the world at Cypress Shore; throwing, now and then, an inquiring and somewhat puzzled glance at the professor, who sat with his fingers demurely interlocked, looking vacantly at the fender. In due time, however, he was drawn into conversation by the two gentlemen, of whom I have spoken. They left us an hour before dinner-time; evidently not a little amused with the professor; and the field was thus left clear.

A little mellow "old peach," just before dinner, thawed the professor's reserve, or timidity, whichever it might be, and he startled me by asking the widow if he could "hev a few minutes confab with her in t'other room?"

"Certainly, sir," she replied, startled even more than myself; and she led the way to the parlor opposite the room in which we were sitting. What transpired at that

interview has never yet been, and probably never will be revealed to the ears of the children of men. The professor looked mysterious and grave, and the widow looked mortified and confused when they returned to the drawing-room; and it was some time before the former cheerful tone of conversation was restored. Dinner was announced. Our hostess rallied, as did the professor, and I congratulated myself on our recovery from the previous somewhat embarrassing restraint.

I have already mentioned that the professor took his surtout from the carriage, and carried it to the hall. Danger, his dog, had, it would seem, conceived it to be his duty to stand sentry over it; and the good-humored servant had winked at the intrusion. Now, it so happened that the widow's dog had returned from some morning excursion, not a little fatigued, and, of course, sharp set for his dinner. The kitchen odors had risen gratefully to his nostrils; and, getting impatient, he ventured to take a most unusual liberty; none other than to enter the piazza, where, at first, as I have since been informed, he did not discover the equally hungry dog of my friend Matters.

I have also mentioned that Mistress Blossom had been blessed with six children; the oldest of which, I may add, was about ten years of age. We had been at the table, perhaps ten minutes, when this last personage, Byron by name, opened the door of the dining-room, and looked inquiringly in upon us.

"Byron, my dear," said the widow, "go out now, that's a good boy!"

But Byron appeared to prefer staying. He pushed the door somewhat more widely open; and I discovered the

flaxen heads and unpresentable dress of a small squadron of urchins behind him.

"Go out now, Byron; there's a gentleman. Dinah'll give you a cake. Run right along now," added she, with a smile on her lips, but with "many stripes" in her eye; "you *must* go now, my dear!"

But Byron did not go. Acting as commodore of the squadron, he now made sail into the dining-room; the rest of the fleet falling into line in his wake. The professor looked frowningly at Byron; but that hero was not to be thus daunted. There was manifestly a disposition on both sides to clear ship for action. I made a diversion in the enemy's favor by chatting with the widow; and had anticipated a quiet adjustment of the difficulty. Great, however, is the uncertainty of human expectations. It would appear that Growler became impatient of delay, and that his appetite got the better of his discretion; for he advanced into the hall directly towards the professor's surtout, when, not having the fear of his master before his eyes, Danger rose wrathfully up and joined issue with the widow's favorite. In the heat of the battle, and before they could be separated, they both got under the table; whereupon, in some spasmodic struggle, they both reared on end, and, in dire crash of crockery and gliding of gravy and mingling of meats, over went the table. The professor caught Growler by the tail, while I took a pitcher of water from the side-table and dashed it into the faces of the belligerents. They were not, however, to be thus parted.

Dire was the wrath that now flushed the face of the excited widow. Seizing the tongs, she advanced towards the dogs and opened her batteries.

"You Growler, you nasty good-for-nothin' creatur'!" exclaimed she, *dealing a blow on the back of Danger*, which provoked an ear-piercing yell. And again, with neither grace in her steps nor heaven in her eye, her arm was high up-raised for another broadside, when her foot slipped in an unheeded stream of gravy, and her centre of gravity was lost. Down, "with hideous ruin and combustion," came Mistress Blossom, amid much rattling of crockery. The servant succeeded in parting the dogs; and while I was assisting the widow to her feet, old Growler darted furiously in his exit between the professor's legs, and he, too, tottered and fell—and great was the fall thereof.

How we apologized and ordered our horses, how the professor beat his dog, and how we rode homewards, are matters so utterly beyond my powers of narrative or description, that I must beg to refer the curious reader for any desired information to

PROF. FUNNYFORD MATTERS,

Steventown,

State of Maine.

CHAPTER XVI.

"A BIG MEETING."

"The arrow out of sight
Does not the sleeper nor the watchman fright ;
To shoot too high doth make but children gaze ;
'Tis that which *hits* the man doth him amaze !"

JOHN BUNYAN'S *Divine Emblems*.

A CHURCH in the South (by which I mean of course a country church) is the place of large and regular resort. It is not at all uncommon for people to ride fifteen or twenty miles to hear a favorite preacher. You may see but a little while after sunrise wagons, coaches, buggies, carts even on the way ; and these are accompanied by young men and frequently ladies on horseback. The appointments for meetings for weeks to come are kept with unfailing accuracy ; and are as much a matter of familiar knowledge, especially among marriageable young men and women, as are the changes of the moon to the sailor. You may see of a Saturday afternoon spruce-looking young gentlemen, in the lightest and neatest of sulkies, driving leagues away to some planter's residence. And without daring to question their motives in becoming such regular churchgoers, there is no harm in the world, I take it, in mentioning the fact that you would be safe in concluding that the planter aforesaid has a daughter, and that she

will find some one of those devoted young gentlemen to hand her from the coach to the door, to wait on her at dinner, and to accompany her home.

Let me say, in passing, that the churches in the South are better attended, regard being had to the density of the population, than at the North. In other words, to be more precise, fewer people at the North would ride so far as is customary here.

"Yaou goin' to meetin' to-day?" asked the professor, on the following morning.

"Certainly. I believe I have promised to go with you."

"Wal, ya-a-s. B'lieve yaou did."

"Who's goin' tew preach?"

"Mr. Philipps."

"Pretty good preacher?"

"Quite a favorite. There may be other preachers present. This is what we call a 'big meeting.'"

"Wal, what's a 'big meeting?'"

"A quarterly meeting; or, one that is held for several days in succession, so called, possibly, because it is so much more largely attended than the ordinary Sabbath meetings."

"I don't much b'lieve in these 'ere big meetin's."

"Why not?"

"Wal, ye see, they is al'ays sech a powerful excitement. When I git excited 'bout anythin' I can't half dew nothin' at, all, an' I'm al'ays sorry after I git excited. I don't b'lieve in excitement, nohow."

"But do not people attend meetings like this—yes, and camp-meetings, too—who would not attend any other?"

"Wal, ya-a-s. Guess they dew."

"Well, then, may not the excitement of such meetings reach the hearts of people whose sympathies could not be otherwise enlisted?"

"Wal, I ain't sure but you're right."

"Can you separate religion from feeling?"

"No."

"And who shall fix the standard of feeling?"

"Yaou can't dew it, nohow."

"Precisely. Well, then, go with us to-day and see how you like a big meeting."

We ate an early breakfast that morning, and it was not later than nine o'clock when we passed the post-office. My uncle, Aunt Corny, and Molly were in the carriage. Bob and Miss Kate, who had become wonderfully well acquainted, followed in the rockaway, while I rode on horseback with the professor. Mr. Sayles was at the door as we passed his house, and he expressed his regret that he should not be able to accompany us. We had drawn rein for a moment, and while chatting with Mr. Sayles, Lieutenant Buckthorn and my friend Haynes rode up.

We rode away in company.

"Kin yaou tell me," said Professor Matters, and he dropped the reins as if for a chat, "kin yaou tell me why in natur' it is that people here don't support the merchants?"

"Are they *not* supported?"

"No, *sir*! What kind o' support 'ud yaou call it ef yaou was tew open a store here and Colonel Smallwood was to buy a pound o' nails, or a few pound o' sugar, or a palm-leaf hat, and then pay tew thousan' dollars tew

his New York agent for niggers' clothes, butes, shues, hats, an' so forth?"

"Not much of a support, certainly. But then my uncle can buy at cheaper rates in New York."

"Ex-act-ly. An' why? Because he runs up sech a tremendous bill. Now suppose he should make Mr. Sayles his agent. Let *him* buy at the north. Wal, of course, Mr. Sayles bein' a man of experience, kin buy tew better advantage than he could ef he *sent* for goods. He goes twice a-year tew New York. Wal, now, will the colonel's agent, who don't care a straw for him, 'cept as a customer, buy at as good prices as an old friend like Mr. Sayles? Of course not. Then your transportation counts up. Wal, suppose you give (I mean all these gentlemen 'bout here) Mr. Sayles a fair profit or commission to buy for 'em, instead of paying it tew a New Yorker, don't it stan' tew reason 'at he could bring you a larger and better assortment, and sell it twenty per cent. cheaper 'n he does now?"

"I believe you are right."

"I *know* it. Ain't they plenty o' merchants in this part o' the country that buys stolen cotton, an' corn, an' tobacker of the niggers?"

"Yes."

"Wal, now, how long could them 'ere mean fellers live ef yaou'd encourage better merchants?"

"You are quite right in your reasoning, Professor Matters," interposed the lieutenant; "and the same truth has not failed to meet the attention of our planters in Carolina. You forget, however, that there must be a common consent in this matter, even were the plan adopted in behalf of one or two of our merchants."

“Haow so?”

“Simply because any one planter who should adopt the plan would put himself very much at the mercy of his merchant; and, although many acknowledge the correctness of the principle, some dislike to give up the habit of buying where they have been so long accustomed to buy. Others are too indolent to consider the matter, or to adopt a new system when fairly convinced of their error.”

“The same difficulty,” said the schoolmaster, “exists with regard to southern manufactures. The South has failed, as a general thing, to sustain them.”

“Yes, even her mechanics,” replied the lieutenant; “but do you know the usual result of encouragement to northern mechanics who settle here? Ask any citizen of Bertie. The reply will be that they can live so easily here; they can earn so much money that they become careless and unfaithful, and then bankrupt; and when a planter has repeatedly been thus disappointed, he is very apt to buy of northern mechanics what ought to be manufactured and sold at his own door. Owing to climate, or change of life, or whatever other cause, mechanics who come here steady, sober, and industrious, become, in a very great number of instances (I think I might safely say a majority), dissipated and worthless.”

“May not the cause lie behind all this?” asked my friend Haynes; “and is there no modification of your social system which would obviate the difficulty?”

“That,” replied the lieutenant, “is the vexed question. The professor would say yes. I think not. I am —— But here comes the doctor.”

Even so. The carriage had approached unheeded until it was quite near us.

"Good morning!" said the doctor, in his usual low, hearty, good-humored voice. And we returned the greeting. "Suppose, my friend Seaworthy," he continued, "suppose you let Tom ride your horse, and so give us the pleasure of your company."

I could have hugged the doctor for the proposition. As a matter of course I accepted it. He did himself credit as a driver, and we soon left the lieutenant far in our wake. It is scarcely necessary to inform the reader that, besides the accomplished Mrs. Jeffreys, there was still another occupant of the barouche; and that I left the doctor to the uninterrupted care of the whip and the reins.

We were not long in reaching the church. It stood in a grove of noble oaks. It was a plain, wooden structure, without spire, or shutters, or paint. As is usual at a country church in the South, there was a well near by, with the necessary sweep, and bucket, and trough. A few had already arrived; and, scattered here and there among the trees, were the horses, hitched to the overhanging branches, while the carriages stood in a motley group by themselves. Handing the ladies to the church door, we joined the little group outside, now constantly increasing, in which my uncle, the squire, and Uncle Baldy were in quiet conversation. The area around the church, from which the underwood had been thoroughly cleared, was speedily thronged with a medley of vehicles, the majority of which were family coaches; while, among them, you might also see lighter carriages, buggies, sulkies, carts and wagons. At intervals, among the trees, were rude deal-tables supported by stakes.

And now came a scene of bustle. Horses and car-

riages were thronging in from every direction, almost invisible in the clouds of dust. Not a few came on foot; and the larger portion of these last were negroes who had walked, probably from five to fifteen miles, to attend the meeting. Servants were hurrying to and fro. Greetings were exchanged. My uncle had a feeling of pride in being regularly at his post near one of the doors, where he had a hearty word and cheerful smile for everybody. It was his custom, too, to pay particular attention to the ladies of his acquaintance, especially the widows; concerning whom he rather liked to be rallied, though he had not the most distant idea of marrying again. I saw him handing the charming Mrs. Blossom from her carriage, while the professor, who had also arrived, stood at a little distance, evidently at loss to decide how his own civilities might be received. He advanced somewhat awkwardly and paid his respects, and his reception was most gracious. The smile was unmistakeable; and as the professor returned from the church-door, he set the ubiquitous white hat more erectly upon his head, drew forth his bandanna with a grand flourish, and took care to leave one-half thereof, when he returned it to the pocket, hanging conspicuously outside. He then drew himself up, threw back his head, and expanded his broad chest, wearing an air of self-gratulation and consequential dignity that revealed to me a shade of his character that I had not before discovered. The church was soon filled. Its occupants were chiefly ladies, a few gentlemen only being seated inside, the greater part sitting or standing near the doors, where temporary seats had been provided. Some appeared intent upon the services; but by far the greatest number continued

to converse in a low tone until near the conclusion of the services.

The preacher was a tall and somewhat stoutly made personage of about fifty. His dress, if not of homespun, was assuredly well nigh as plain. His collar, unstarched but scrupulously white, rolled negligently over ; exposing a large and well-formed neck. The prevailing expression of his face, which was one of strongly marked features, was that of simple earnestness and benevolence. His high, but somewhat narrow, forehead overhung grayish and deep-set eyes. The mouth and chin were indicative of much strength and decision of character, and the whole presence of the man reminded me very strongly of the personal appearance of Patrick Henry. The tones of his voice, as he began reading the well known hymn

"Children of the Heavenly King,
As we journey let us sing,"

were singularly full, and rich, and deep ; and I could see that at the outset he was (perhaps unconsciously) creating a feeling of seriousness in his little congregation. The air to which the words were sung, though not then familiar to me, was a simple and heart-stirring melody, in which nearly every one joined ; and the roof rung with it. Then came an earnest prayer, and another hymn ; and the preacher announced for his subject the Year of Jubilee.

He began by saying that thirty years ago he had stood in the same pulpit. "I had," he continued, "many warm friends here at Lebanon"—(the country churches have usually some such distinguishing name). "There was old Brother G——, who has gone home to

his rest. He is in heaven, my brethren. He has heard the welcome words,

'Servant of God, well done!'

which you sung at his grave. There was good old Brother H——. He's at home, too; one of the forty-and-four thousand that sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. His frail body is dissolved, and the eyes that wept over him will see him no more forever. Forever? *Here*, on earth, I mean. There was pious Sister B——. Many of you remember her, though, as I look round, I see only here and there a face I know. Yes, here is her son. My brother, are you a soldier of the cross? The spirits of the departed are waiting here to carry home glorious tidings. Come! who'll enlist to-day for the holy war?"

Simple as was the exordium, and imperfectly as I have described it, it brought the tears to many an eye. The talking was hushed outside the church. The aisles and pulpit steps were soon tenanted, and the listeners gathered around the doors and windows. With the same simplicity of which I have spoken, the preacher then gave a brief account of the Year of Jubilee.

He spoke first of the antiquity of the Sabbath; of the necessity of periodical rest; of the duty of observing the Sabbath as a necessity of our animal, moral, and intellectual nature, rather than an arbitrary law; of the results of cheerful acquiescence in the requirement. Then he adverted to the seventh year similarly set apart; and, finally, of "the sabbath of years"—the Jubilee. He spoke of the proclamation of liberty; of the returning of "every man unto his possession" and "every

man unto his family ;” of the abundance of the previous years whereby all necessity for toil was removed ; of the redemption of property ; of restoration from servitude. He drew a simple and most affecting picture of the changes that ensued on the advent of that year ; of the delirious excitement of the poor debtor as the day drew near, and of the feelings with which he looked down from some neighboring hill, or over the hedge, upon the familiar features of the old homestead. He then pictured to us the nearer approach of the day ; of the last few hours ; of the expected sentinels, trumpet in hand, awaiting the hour that should usher in the year ; and then that shout from all Israel “ of thousands as of one,” and the trumpet-blast that rung from hill to hill throughout the land !

“Sinner !” said he, at length, in a low, pleading, earnest tone, “you are toil-worn, you are bankrupt, you are the slave of sin ; you are helpless, hopeless. I proclaim to you good tidings. The Year of Jubilee is come. Come *home !* You shall *rest !*”

‘ You that have sold for naught
Your heritage above,
Shall *have it back* unbought ;’

You shall be free. You shall have hope and joy in the dark valley. You shall live and reign forever. Will no one come ?”

A low voice now struck the air of

“ Blow ye the trumpet, blow,
The gladly solemn sound.”

The effect was startling. Scarcely a voice among the hundreds that was not swelling the mighty chorus. A

young girl, perhaps some sixteen or seventeen years of age, now rose, delirious with excitement, shouting, sobbing, laughing, and exclaiming "O! I am so happy!" and threw herself into the arms of a lady near her. Another, a beautiful girl, crossed to the side of the church opposite to that on which she had been seated, knelt before a schoolmate and begged her to go to the altar. In spite of every effort, I felt the tears streaming from my eyes; and, on looking round, I found that there were few who were not similarly affected. The professor had withstood it all until the young girl of whom I have spoken rose from her seat and knelt, when he buried his face in his hands and sobbed aloud. Ladies went to their acquaintances, parents to children, children to parents, brothers to sisters, and sisters to brothers. The preacher descended to the altar. One by one came a score of his congregation around him. Amid sobs, and groans, and shrieks, the rich tones of the preacher were heard in prayer. A hymn followed, the benediction was pronounced, and the congregation was dismissed.

The deal benches were now removed from the church by the negroes and placed near the table. It is the custom for planters to carry a quantity of bread, fowls, barbecue (roast shoat), bacon, vegetables, and, very commonly, a dessert; which are placed upon the rude tables, and acquaintances, friends, and strangers are hospitably invited to dine with them. This affords a delightful opportunity for chat among friends, and for the gallantry of the young men (to say nothing of widowers who have ceased to be disconsolate) to the ladies. The professor devoted himself especially to the edification of Mistress Blossom. Bob was omnipresent to

Miss Kate Smallwood, and I need not say that I was that day at the table of Dr. Jeffreys.

While we were at dinner, the negroes held a meeting in the grove. They had been even more excited than the rest of the congregation. The woods rang with the notes of their hymn. They leaped, shouted, clapped their hands. They embraced one another. I could hear such exclamations as "Glory!" "I'm going home!" "Will you meet me there?" "O! I'm happy, happy, happy!"

A short evening service followed, and we turned homeward. There was a stroll that evening in the gray twilight, and Helen Jeffreys was by my side. My heart throbbed, my limbs trembled, my voice was husky, and I had scarcely the power of utterance. Angry with myself for the weakness, I had just assayed to throw it off and give words to the feelings that had so long lain pent in my breast, when a servant came running towards us, panting for breath, and exclaimed,

"O, Miss Helen! do come to de house! Massa Haynes mighty sick; b'lieve he gwan to die!"

We hurried home. The young scholar was indeed in danger. He was bleeding profusely at the mouth. The excitement of the day had been too much for him. He sank rapidly, and when I left him at daybreak the next morning he had sunk into a gentle sleep, breathing so lightly and feebly as to make me apprehensive that he would not survive the day.

CHAPTER XVII.

A PUBLIC RECEPTION.

"Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember, with advantages,
What feats he did that day."

KING HENRY V.

WE were somewhat surprised the next morning, while we were at breakfast, by the arrival of a servant with a note for Professor Matters. He looked very intently at it for a moment, as if endeavoring to decide whether or not he had ever seen the handwriting before. He then opened it, read it, pondered awhile, leaning his head on his hand, and handed it, with a look of infinite mystification, to me.

"Jest read that 'ere, ef yaou please," said he, "an' tell me what you think on't."

"Shall I read it aloud?"

"Sartin."

Accordingly I read the following letter:—

"'WINDSOR, *April* —, 1850.

"'TO PROFESSOR FUNNYFORD MATTERS.

"'Dear Sir:—The undersigned are a committee, appointed at a meeting held last evening in this place, for the purpose of making some definite arrangements for a public expression of our regard to the author of the new

system of hydrology. It was resolved to tender to you a public dinner, and the committee venture to name this day as the most convenient to the citizens of this place, provided it shall also be convenient for yourself. We have also ventured, in behalf of the meeting, to request Col. John Smallwood to convey you to this place.

“ ‘ The committee suggest to you that some remarks from you will be anxiously looked for after the cloth is removed. They feel honored in being the medium through which the respects of the meeting are tendered to you, and are, with the most distinguished consideration,

“ Your friends and obt. servants,

“ ‘ WM. A. JEFFREYS,

“ ‘ ARCHIBALD BUCKTHORN,

“ ‘ HENRY BUCKTHORN.’ ”

“ Naow, don’t that ’ere beat all ? ” asked the professor.

“ It is certainly very complimentary,” said I. “ You will go, of course ? ”

“ Would *yaou* ? ”

“ Most certainly.”

“ I need not say,” interposed the colonel, “ that my horses and carriage are at your service. I regret that I cannot accompany you.”

“ Kin *yaou* go with me, Mr. Seaweather ? ”

“ If my friend Haynes is not too ill, I will do so with pleasure.”

“ Maussa Henry better dis mawnin’,” said Grief.

“ Well, then, Professor Matters, I am at your service.”

We left Cypress Shore about nine o’clock. I saw that Buckthorn and the doctor, with the lieutenant, were

at the bottom of the day's proceedings ; whether to quiz some of their Windsor friends, or the professor, or both, I could not decide. I could not help thinking, however, that, whatever might be the design, the affair was a practical commentary on the very prevalent custom of public dinners. Let me not be understood to condemn them. I think them favorable opportunities, in very many instances, for the interchange of sentiments and civilities, and as an exchange of a private and permissive for a public and legitimate bore.

"They's one thing, Mr. Seawether"—so the professor persisted in calling me, in spite of frequent corrections—"that I like in society here to the south."

"What may it be?"

"Jest this; every man you meet here is somethin' new tew ye. I never get tired o' watchin' the colonel, and Uncle Baldy, and the squire, and Sayles, because they're all different from one 'nother. They don't think alike; they don't act alike; they don't talk alike; nor they don't dress alike. Now I *like* that. Ridin' along here, as we do now, ef we meet a man, why he's a sort of a volum to me, as it were, an' I love to read him. In the north, where folks swarm tewgather so, and everywhere in taowns and cities, people seem tew git rubbed intew a sort o' general smoothness that don't give a man nothin' to take hold on. All alike, jest like a milliner's fashions. I like to see the old colonel (who you know is a hard customer to argy with) meet Uncle Baldy, who is a trifle flighty, but a nation smart feller. When flint and steel comes together yaou know the fire flies. Wal, that's the charm of s'ciety here to Bertie. Even the darkies is original. There's old Peter Law, yender,

jest comin' hum from mill ; now, I'll ask him a question, and see what kind of an answer he'll give me."

Peter soon came up.

"Wal, Peter, haow dew yaou dew this mornin'?"

"On'y tol'ble, maussa ; on'y tol'ble. Had mighty bad aguy yisterday. How you do dis mawnin', maussa?"

"I'm dewin' nicely, I thank ye, Peter."

We bade the old servant good morning, and rode on.

"Did yaou hear that?" asked the professor.

"Yes."

"Wal, now, ef I've asked that feller once, I hev asked him mor'n fifty times in the last week haow he was ; and that 'mighty bad aguy' has been the song every time. The darned old sinner! I wonder he don't git quilted every day. Haow old du yaou think he is?"

"Perhaps fifty."

"Fifty? He took his fidavy 'at he was eighty-five no longer ago'n yesterday. I du b'lieve the colonel's right. He says they pretend to be a darned sight older'n they are jest tew git red o' work."

In similar conversation the time wore away until we had driven within half a mile of the Cashie, when we were met by a deputation from town. The professor was received with the most marked respect. While he was exchanging greetings with the other gentlemen, Dr. Jeffreys proffered me a small handbill, which ran as follows:—

RECEPTION OF PROFESSOR MATTERS!

ORDER OF ARRANGEMENTS.

The Committee of Arrangements request their fellow-citizens to assemble in front of the court-house, at eleven o'clock A. M., this morning. A procession will then and there be formed under the direction of Archibald Buckthorn, Esq., as follows:—

Carriage and Six, for Professor Matters.

Music.

Committee of Arrangements.

Carriages.

Gentlemen on Horseback.

Citizens Generally.

The procession will leave the court-house at half-past eleven precisely, to meet the expected guest.

With a gravity worthy a better cause, Uncle Baldy formed the procession. The professor entered the carriage with mine host of the Windsor Hotel. The music was furnished by a violin, a squealing clarionet, and a hand-organ; the player on this last instrument having luckily arrived that day. The procession was soon formed, and we took up our line of march to the air of "Who'll be king but Charley?" As we entered the village, the professor (it would seem that public receptions had occurred at Steventown) bowed to the mystified citizens on each side of the street. He was escorted to the hotel, where a private apartment had been engaged for the purpose, and by the harmless expedient of obliging him to grasp the same hand twice or three times, he was kept busy in shaking hands for something like two hours. Dinner was then announced.

After the cloth was removed, Uncle Baldy rose and said: "Fill your glasses, if you please, gentlemen. I

have the pleasure to introduce somewhat more intimately to your acquaintance my friend and honored guest, Professor Matters."

("Hurrah! Three times three!")

"It was a remark of the celebrated Samuel Houston," (Hurrah! hurrah!) "that there was never a man who did not live too long, or die too soon, for his own glory." (Hurrah!) "But, gentlemen, we here see a scientific individual, the Columbus, if I may so express myself," (Hurrah!) "of a new discovery; who seems likely to prove an exception to the rule. On this subject, however, it would be indelicate for me to dwell." (Go on! go on!) "I propose to you the health of Professor Funnyford Matters."

And the table was in a roar as he resumed his seat. The professor rose in considerable embarrassment, and, with a preliminary flourish of his bandanna, spoke as follows:—

"Feller-citizens:

"Unaccustomed as I hev al'ays ben tew public speakin' (and I've no recollection 'o dewin' anythin' in that line sence I left the Steventown Academy), I scarcely know what tew say on the present 'casion. Haowever, I'm very much obliged tu yaou all for the honor yaou've done me, an' for the dinner an' fixin's. My system, gentlemen, I kin better explain tew yaou in buildin' than I kin in a speech. I am permitted to refer yaou tu Colonel Smallwood, an' I hev a few stifikits here which I'll trouble yaou to pass round the table. I conclude, gentlemen, by givin' yaou a toast: 'The American Union; like hydraulic cement, it ain't good for nothin' after it's broken.'"

The professor sat down amid a roar of applause. Speeches, songs, and anecdotes followed; and it was not until near sunset that we left Windsor.

"I must confess," said the professor, as we rode homeward, "that I didn't expect this."

"You have certainly been honored."

"That I hev. -I wish I could git an account of it to *The Steventown Aurora*."

"That is easily accomplished," said I. "We will have the proceedings published in *The Gladiator*, and forward a copy."

"Wal, then I consider my fortin' made. Won't they open their eyes to Steventown?"

"They certainly will."

Dr. Jeffreys, Uncle Baldy, and the lieutenant now overtook us, and it was agreed that the proceedings should be duly reported and printed. We drove rapidly home. As we were approaching the house, the professor turned to me and said: "Did yaou ever notice the map of this 'ere State?"

"Yes."

"Wal, then, yaou've obsarved the sea-coast, I s'pose."

"Yes."

"Wal, I undertake tew say that they ain't nothin' like it nowhere. A big nateral breakwater along the whole coast, so 'at the smallest vessels can navigate the sounds. They talk about makin' an inlet. They don't need no inlet. True, they ain't no good harbors for big vessels; but Norfolk is near enough for a port of entry, and these small vessels are plenty big enough for your commerce. Better take the money they'd waste on an inlet and build railroads. Hello! here we be tu the

gate! Wal, I'm glad tew git hum. I don't like these public duins nohow. I could ha' built tew cistu'ns, an' not ben half so much tuckered out."

We found the family at supper. We sat long over the table, and the professor recounted the events of the day. When I left the drawing-room he was still giving in prolix detail a description of the dinner at Windsor.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SERVANTS.

"Et tibi BETTY; tibi vel nitidissima Letty."

PARNELL. (*Trans.*)

"So service shall with steeled sinews toil."

FROM that evening I was almost constantly with the poor scholar. He rallied under the medical attendance of Dr. Jeffreys, and the ceaseless kindness of the household. His favorite servant, Tom, was assigned to his service. The faithful negro was constantly at hand, slept in the sick-room, and never seemed weary of his task.

Ten days passed; yet the improvement was less than we anticipated. A letter had been dispatched to his mother, informing her of his illness. As the doctor was indebted to the invalid, he enclosed the amount to her, adding fifty dollars from his own purse, that she might find no pecuniary difficulty in coming at once to Underwood. She does not know, to this day, like many another sufferer, that she received from Doctor Jeffreys a farthing more than was due to her son. She came, at length, accompanied by her daughters; plain-looking, but well-bred, intelligent, refined young women, the eldest of whom was not more than twenty. Their

presence seemed to work wonders for the invalid. He grew better, slowly, but steadily; and the pale cheek and careworn expression of the despairing mother began to give place to something like cheerfulness and quiet. Meanwhile, Helen Jeffreys had won the hearts of Laura and Mary Haynes. Lieutenant Buckthorn became, all at once, a daily visitor at Underwood; and Mr. Snowden, a young clergyman, recently installed in a neighboring parish, seemed to consider himself called upon to bestow very considerable extra-parochial attention to the younger of the sisters. The invalid soon regained his strength so far as to be able to ride; and we dismissed our apprehensions for his recovery. The mother and daughters were detained, on one pretext or other, for several weeks; and when it was found impossible to keep them longer, a little school was made up for them. A vacant cottage, about half a mile from Underwood, was put in repair, and the happy mother, with her son and daughters, was induced to take up her residence there. Little Molly and Sophie and Susan Buckthorn were at once placed under her care. Servants were ostensibly hired to her, but in reality given; while my Uncle John, the squire, and Uncle Baldy, as well as the kind-hearted Mr. Sayles, found means in one way or other to make the cottage a snug, comfortable home. It may be taken for granted that the doctor and the ladies were not remiss in doing their part, and we had at length the pleasure to see the little family prosperous and happy. Their arrival seemed to give a new zest to the social courtesies of the neighborhood. They were so well-bred, so unobtrusive, so true to their duties and position, that either of their neigh-

bors would gladly have given them a home, as members of the family.

Meanwhile, the professor had received the expected materials and been constantly employed. It may have been a week after the invalid had so far recovered as to take the air in the carriage, that he (the professor) returned to Cypress Shore. He had succeeded beyond his expectations, and having a few days' leisure came to pay us a visit.

"Haow du yaou du?" said he, as he ascended the steps of the piazza. "Glad to see ye. Seems like hum tew me here mor'n anywheres I've been. Aunt Corny, or, Miss Smallwood I s'pose I shud say, how are ye? Ah! Molly! how d'y? Miss Kate, I swow yaou grow more interestin' every day. Ef I hadn't rayther committed myself to Ma'am Blossom, I think I shud give Mr. Bob a tussel afore he shud hev ye. Where is he?"

"O, he's returned to college."

"Yaou don't say so. Ah! colonel! haow du yaou du? Mr. Seaweather, your sarvant. Where's Grief? I'll be darned ef I dont fairly bile to see the critter. He's the best sarvant I ever seen."

"He certainly is one of the best servants in the world," said the colonel.

"What'ud you take for him?"

"Take for him?" exclaimed my uncle; "why, sir, nothing could tempt me to sell him. I would not sell a favorite horse, much less a favorite servant."

"Don't you s'pose he'd rayther be free?"

"I have offered him his freedom."

"An' he wouldn't accept of it?"

"No. I traveled in seven of the Northern States with

him, two years ago, and offered him his freedom, but he refused, and, I think, wisely."

"Wal, haow is't that yaou hev sech good niggers? Where I've been buildin' cistu'ns for the last week or tew, the most on 'em was the most triflin' or'nary critters I ever seen."

"I think I can give you some reasons for the difference."

"Wal, *dew*, ef ye please."

"In the first place, I visit every cabin on my plantation regularly. You will find them in good repair. You have noticed, too, that they are built near the slashes, or swamps, where wood and water are both convenient. Then my negroes are well fed; they cannot, as a general thing, eat their allowance. They are well clad. They have, those who care for it, sufficient land for a garden. They have regular hours for labor, and time to attend to their own wants at their cabins. I never rob them of their holidays. They always have a pass, when they wish for it, to visit their friends and relatives."

"But don't you think it's rayther hard to make 'em work Sundays?"

"They are not obliged to do so. Those who work at the fishery, it is true, work on the Sabbath for some five or six weeks in the spring. Probably your opinions and mine would not coincide on that point. I believe I have already told you that I not only provide them—none of my neighbors do it—with water-proof clothing, but pay them liberally for their extra labor."

"Yes; yaou told me 'bout that. Wal, how happens it that your niggers dew so much work? As a gen'l thing, they're a darned lazy, triflin', wastin' set."

"It is easily explained. My slaves are divided into companies, or gangs. Each of these has a captain, and has usually the same work to do from year to year. The batteaux at the fishery have each their captain. Neither the captains nor the overseer has the authority to punish, and all delinquencies are reported to me. Moreover, I am constantly offering premiums to industry and fidelity. I encourage them; *I trust them*; I keep one servant expressly to play for their amusement, and he has very little to do except to use his violin and keep it in order. They are carefully attended to when they are sick, and have the same medical advice as myself. Have you ever been in my hospital?"

"No, I b'lieve not. Yaou said somethin' 'bout it, but, somehow, I never went in."

"Well, you will find it worth your while to visit it. Old Peggy has nothing in the world to do but to attend to the sick ones."

"Wal, colonel, I can't quite feel reconciled yet to lookin' at a man and thinkin' 'bout buyin' an' sellin' him; but ef anythin' *could* reconcile me tew it, it 'ud be jest sech treatment as you show your slaves."

"Not to speak of the smiles of Mistress Blossom, who owns so many," suggested my uncle, dryly.

I may be permitted to add to the information incidentally imparted to the reader by the foregoing conversation, a brief notice of two or three of my uncle's servants. Grief is already tolerably well known to the reader. I remember him as a musical, fun-loving negro, whose low voice, light, active step, and ready smile, made him a general favorite. His great merits were

strict honesty and fidelity, added to very great ingenuity and tact. His place could not easily have been supplied.

There was old Harry Hog, the swineherd, with a head, and wisdom, and gravity little inferior to the wisest of his white brethren. He was invaluable in all executive duties, and as a sort of walking almanac, book of record, gazetteer—what not?—for names, dates, and places.

Little Fred I remember as a genius that interested me and annoyed the professor. He informed me, as he had informed the professor, that he was “’bout forty years ole.” He may have been eight. He walked with the gait of ninety. It must have been the twenty-first or second of June, the longest in the year, videlicet, in which he could do no more than black a pair of boots, lead Old Hampton to water, and go for the cows. He was a gentle, low-spoken boy, and rather a good boy, if I may say so, with the exception that he was fond of playing what sailors call “Tom Cox’s traverse; two turns around the long-boat and a pull at the scuttle-butt!”

CHAPTER XIX.

CHANGES.—A VOYAGE.

"Thou, Julia, hast metamorphosed me."

"Never came reformation in a flood
With such a heady current."—K. HENRY IV.

THE next mail-day brought us a long letter from Bob. I shall not easily forget the day. May had come. The grass was springing up, the flowers were in profusion, the leaves were putting forth, the air was warm, like that of early summer. We had just left the tea-table when Fred came with the letter-bag. The professor had left us for a call at Squire Butterson's. Seating ourselves in the piazza, my Aunt Corny adjusted her spectacles to read the letter.

"Wait a minute, Corny," said my uncle. "Tinsey, bring me a coal of fire."

"Ya-a-s, maussa."

The coal arrived, the pipe was lighted, and my aunt read as follows:—

"PROVIDENCE, *May 1st*, 1849.

"MY DEAR AUNT:

"'Shall I confess it? I am really homesick.' (Do you hear that, Kate?) 'I have been here a whole week (I thought it would last forever), and have done

nothing. I did not report myself to the president until yesterday, and so he ignored my presence. I am told that they have a similar custom on board our men-o'-war. A midshipman, for instance, asks leave to go ashore. On his return, as he reaches the gangway, he touches his cap to the officer of the deck, and when he gets near enough, touches his cap a second time, and says, "I've returned on board, sir." I suppose it is all right.

"As I said before, I have done literally nothing. I made an effort to read a chapter in metaphysics; but it was of no use. My thoughts *would* wander away to Bertie; and so I am stalking about the halls, very much as the shades of the unburied wanderer in the dominions of Pluto. I've a proposition to make you. I gave up my California scheme, you know, to please father and yourself—" ("The devil you did!" growled my uncle.)—"and now I think you owe *me* a concession. I must go home. I am tired of playing schoolboy at college. I will go to Edenton and read law with our friend Judge M——. I can keep the Flirt there at the wharf, and she will carry me home in an hour whenever I wish to go. My law studies once completed, why, then I will look into politics a little; or else I will colonize at father's new plantation (how in the world came he to call it Bucklersbury?) and settle into a take-the-world-easily country gentleman. So you may expect me within a week. I can accompany you to Nag's Head, unless Cousin Kate decides to accompany Dr. Jeffreys' family to the mountains.

"My visit home has changed me every way. My *energies* have an object. I am no longer a boy. I

have something to live for ; and you shall see, my dear aunt, that I am now in earnest. I am going to work. The wild oats are all sown that will bear any harvest for

“ Your affectionate nephew,

“ BOB. ”

“ Now Kate, read us yours ! ” said my uncle, turning his head ; but Kate had disappeared.

“ I suppose it must be so, ” said he, after musing awhile. “ It were better to stay for the principle of finishing what he has begun. However, if Bob does not deceive me, he will not sit quietly down and leave his books to grow musty. ”

A week had not passed before he came ; and after a long consultation, he announced his decision to clear up Bucklersbury and make it his home. Accordingly, with his usual energy, he went at once with forty negroes into the depths of the woods, and while he was clearing the rich soil, a contract was made with a neighboring planter to cut a canal through the low grounds. The work went bravely on.

Meanwhile, the weeks glided away until the colonel began to think of Nag’s Head. The schoolmaster had recovered, and was prospering beyond his hopes. His little school had been enlarged, and a publisher in Philadelphia had undertaken to publish his book. Of the professor, we had heard nothing for three or four weeks ; and we only awaited his arrival to go to Nag’s Head. He came at last, but much to our surprise, announced his intention to remain at that place but a single week. He had engagements, he said, with a somewhat myste-

rious air, that would compel him to return ; and that he should then go home to Steventown.

It was nearly sunset of a fine evening about the middle of July that we embarked for our summer retreat. Capt. Gasket had just given his pet, the good schooner Sarah Porter, a new set of sails and a coat of paint, and was manifestly flattered by our genuine start of surprise at the improvement in her appearance. Dr. Jeffreys had decided to accompany us, as had also Madam Haynes and her family, and what with furniture, live-stock, and passengers, the little schooner had a motley and somewhat cumbersome deck-load. The squire, accompanied by his lady and children, stood on the shore and waved his good-by. A light air from the west struck our sails, and as we passed Gravestone Point and approached the broad Chowan, it freshened to a fine whole-sail breeze. I remember feeling, as the trim schooner heeled to starboard with the wind from the open river, a sailor-like regret for the months I had idled away on shore. I bared my brow to the breeze, and was on the point of promising myself to be at sea ere the moon waned, when there came from the weather-quarter (I was standing by the larboard bumpkin) the notes of

"Shades of evening, close not o'er us,
Leave our lonely bark awhile."

I recognized the voice of my Cousin Kate, accompanied by those of Helen Jeffreys, the schoolmaster, and his sisters, in a second. I went aft, and for a while my sea project was forgotten.

The reader's experience may explain for him better than any words of mine the fact that I had not yet

breathed to Helen a single word of the nature of my feelings towards her. Indeed, for the last few weeks I had but seldom seen her, and never alone. Since the recovery of the schoolmaster I had almost invariably found them together. Her manner, as well as his own, had become somewhat distant, and it was in merely mechanical obedience to the impulse of the moment that I went aft and joined the ladies in their song.

The breeze freshened. There was no moon; but there was not a cloud to be seen, and the heavens were glistening with a wilderness of stars. The muddy Albatross was one broad sheet of foam, and before we passed the Perquimans we were obliged to take the bonnet off the jib and reef our courses. The ladies, with the exception of my Aunt Corny, still kept the deck. The schoolmaster went early below; the professor was forward, in the agonies of sea-sickness. I took the helm from Old Joe, the mate, and the feeling of the tiller, as the little schooner bounded on, awoke all my old love for the sea. I became somewhat excited. The landsman can conceive no better idea of the feeling than by remembering his own when mounted upon a young, lithe, mettlesome horse.

"This reminds you of old times, I suppose," said Dr. Jeffreys. He was standing, as he spoke, near the open cabin-door, where the light from the cabin-lamp partially exposed his fine features, as well as those of Helen, who was hanging on his arm.

"Yes; and as I have idled away the summer thus far, it is time that I were afloat again."

"At sea?"

"Certainly; where else? I hope to be on the deck of my ship ere I am a week older."

I looked at Helen as I uttered the last words; why I cannot well explain. She had apparently a design either of fathoming the mysteries of the mariner's compass and binnacle-lamp, or of inventing some improvement in one or the other, for I did not see her face for some minutes. When at last she did look up, she stepped hastily to the weather-side of the bench beneath the traveler, and seated herself by my Cousin Kate. A few moments later both went below.

"What's in the wind now, Gregory?" asked my uncle.

"Nothing, sir, save that I wish to be at work."

"At work? And is there not sea room enough at Bucklersbury for yourself and Bob?"

"Abundance; but you know my father preferred another kind of furrows, and I confess that I have acquired something of the same taste."

"Since when?" asked the doctor, dryly. My uncle went growling below. The only audible words were, as he reached the foot of the ladder, "Never knew when he was well off; just like Brother John for all the world!" The doctor soon followed. The professor crept aft, and with a despairing look at the boiling foam through which the schooner was ploughing her way, spoke never a word, but crawled wearily to his berth. I staid some hours on deck, remaining at the helm until near midnight, when the wind suddenly lulled. Not caring to steer in a calm, I called Old Joe to relieve me. The captain had gone below for a nap, and we were alone on deck. The sea was running high, and there being but little wind to *steady* the vessel, she rolled and pitched in a style that

set everything that was not lashed into dire commotion. The booms swung and squeaked, the sails swayed to and fro with a fierce *slat* that set the blocks and running-rigging into a deafening clatter. Old Joe was glad to get a tiller-rope for his support at the helm, and even then his post was no sinecure. Meanwhile, from the depths of the cabin and hold (there were fifteen servants in the latter) came the notes of woe. The sounds were unmistakeable. My Aunt Corny had companionship in her sea-sickness. In ludicrous contrast to the feminine outcry for lights, and peppermint and brandy, rolled forth to upper air the growling bass of Professor Matters, in a heart-speaking groan.

"O-h-h-h! A-h-h-h! O Lord! is the boat a goin' tew sink? Oh! doctor! Colonel Smallwood! Oh-h-h! Mr. Seaweather! Joe!"

"Sah!"

"Is it blowin' much?"

"Ya-a-s, maussa," replied Joe, in obedience to a hint from me; "an Irish hurricane."

"Kin I go up stairs?"

"Better not come on deck, maussa. Mos' mawnin' by dis time."

"O! Oh-h-h-h! E-be-ne-zer! how sick I am!"

The wind sprung up at length, and, becoming sleepy, I wrapped my cloak around me and betook myself to a nap under the lee of the house.

We anchored at sunrise off Nag's Head. In three days we were domesticated. The professor was shown the lions; Roanoke Island, the Fresh Ponds, and the Inlet were visited in succession, and people laughed, during the professor's visit, "who never laughed before."

On the last day of his visit (it was but a week), he delivered a free lecture on hydrology at the hotel, bade us a hasty adieu, and took the packet for Bertie. We heard nothing of him for some days. Time passed in the usual round of amusements, and we were beginning to wonder what could have become of him. A package of letters was brought us one evening from the packet (there is no post-office at Nag's Head), in which there were either letters or papers for nearly every member of the family. I was reading one from an old shipmate, when Kate suddenly exclaimed—

“See here! ‘Married, on the 25th inst., at —, by the Rev. Mr. Phillips, Professor F. Matters to Mrs. Julia Blossom.’”

“I trust that the professor's conscientious scruples are now at rest,” said my uncle, dryly; and he resumed the reading of his letters.

“Did you ever?” said my Aunt Corny, dropping her knitting-work; “who would have thought it? Well, there's no accounting for tastes.”

The evening passed. Weeks passed away, and September was on the wane. We began to talk of going home. It was but a day or two before we left Nag's Head, that I mounted a horse to accompany Kate and Helen to the beach.

The latter was mounted on a horse borrowed for the occasion, and I expressed some uneasiness at the arrangement. A gay laugh from both the ladies was my reward, and we galloped away. The sun was but a little way above the horizon, the air was cool and bracing, and the ladies were in excellent spirits. I had but a day or two *before received* a favorable reply to my application for

a ship, and my laugh was as hearty and frequent as their own. As we galloped along the beach, we saw not far distant a group of children at play, seated upon the sand. The roar of the breakers prevented their hearing our approach until we were very near them; when, startled by the footfalls of our horses, a little girl sprang with a shriek to her feet. Her bonnet fell off, and was blown beneath the feet of the horse on which Helen was mounted. He reared and sprang forward, and his rider fell. It happened that she was nearest to the breakers. The beach fell somewhat abruptly. As I leaped from my horse to go to her assistance, she rose, and, unconscious in her terror what she did, walked two or three steps directly towards the breakers, when a huge swell broke over her and carried her into the surf. It was but the work of a moment to plunge after her. I caught her arm, and as we were carried toward the shore, I got footing on the sand; and, lifting her in my arms, her weight saved us from being carried back. Before another wave could reach us, I had borne her beyond its reach. My cousin Kate had had sufficient presence of mind to gallop homewards for assistance; the children, too, had fled, and as I laid the apparently lifeless form of the fair girl upon the beach, we were alone. Knowing that assistance would arrive before I could reach the house, I still supported her head; watching in an agony of terror for the approach of some one, and conjuring her to speak. Presently a low sigh reached my ear, and this was succeeded by a long-drawn respiration. Her eyes met mine.

"God bless you!" exclaimed she, faintly. I pressed my lips to her forehead. An answering look met mine,

I knew that I was beloved by her whom I had loved for many a year.

Assistance came, and we were soon at home. Ere the week had passed, we were at home in Bertie; and need I say that Messrs. Bell & Brothers were in danger of being obliged to dispense with my services as master of the good ship *Argo*, then fitting for a voyage to the Levant?

CHAPTER XX.

THE OVERSEER.

"For the want of a better, faith! you can take me!

Ochone! Widow Machree!"

RORY O'MORE.

AND glad were we all to get home. The week preceding our departure had brought such a sad series of leave-takings, that the spirits of the whole household had been depressed. We left Nag's Head a little before sunset on a beautiful day, late in September. As we sailed onward towards home, there was some little effort to make the evening pass pleasantly. There was some chat of the friends we had left, and of home. Old Joe was called upon to sing; and he accordingly gave us "The Parliament of England." The ladies, too, struck the air of more than one of the songs we had been accustomed to sing. The night was beautiful. The sound was glistening in the moonlight; but, in spite of every effort, we were all somewhat sad. The ladies retired, and the gentlemen followed their example. The schoolmaster was the last to leave the deck, and I remember being awaked by his cough as he came below. I awoke on the following morning at two o'clock.

"Is that the Chowan?" I asked of the man at the helm.

"Dat's de Chowan."

"And that is the light-boat at the mouth of the Roanoke?"

"Yes, maussa."

"Then we are within an hour's sail of home?"

"Yes, maussa."

We were not long in reaching the little creek. It was perhaps three o'clock when we let go our anchor. Dr. Jeffreys was aroused by the rattling of the cable. He came on deck, and, springing into the boat with me, we made our way to the landing at Underwood. After a three hours' sleep at the house, we returned to the schooner for our party; and at nine o'clock we were all gathered round the hospitable board at his home.

There was but one thing to mar the pleasure of our return, and that was the illness of the schoolmaster. From the very day of our arrival he grew worse, and we again began to despair of his recovery. Yet he rallied occasionally, and there were yet, we thought, some grounds for hope.

On the first mail-day after our return, there came, among other letters, one for Mr. Barney O'Brien. Besides his, there came cards from Mr. and Mrs. Matters, inviting us to attend a party to be given at their residence a week from that day. I have omitted to say that an Irish overseer on a southern plantation is the greatest of rarities. I do not believe that I have met ten Irishmen in both Carolina and Virginia. Barney O'Brien was a cabin-boy on board the ship in which my father was wrecked. He was afterwards taken into the employment of my uncle, and became his overseer. His story was that he had run away from home for the sake of be-

coming a sailor. My uncle had induced him to write to his friends. He did so; and such was the glowing account that he gave of life in Bertie, that he had long been hoping for the happiness of seeing his mother and brothers, to say nothing of one Miss Nora Mahoney, a fortieth cousin, still remembered as the fairest of all the bright-eyed girls of "swate Ennis."

Barney was summoned to the house after tea; and my Aunt Corny, being deputed to decipher the epistle, read as follows:—

"ENNIS, *March 20th*, 1849.

"To Mr. Barney O'Brien, Esq., overseer in Bertie, State of North Carolina, United States of America:

"DEAR BARNEY:—Don't be in the laste hurry in life to get this same, as peradventure we won't send it at all, at laste not for the present, as we're in quandary about goin' till Ameriky. Father Brady thinks that we'd be safe to be shipwacked on the Coast of—Philadelphia, I think he calls it, or some of the States. Paraties is chape, too, and maybe we won't go. You don't know Father Brady. Father Brannan's dead this day three years, and Father Brady is with us since. Judy Finnigan is married. Nora Mahoney's mother's dead, and Nora wouldn't require a dale of persuadin' to go till Ameriky wid me. Good by, dear Barney.

"Your affectionate mother,

"BIDDY O'BRIEN.

"P. S.—I've told Rory Finnigan, who's writin' this, to say that we'll come; and, of course, ye'll meet us at Norfolk, as ye tould us in the letther. Make yerself aisy

about Nora. She's goin' wid me. We'll go on board the Thaseus, I'm thinkin'. She's bound till Norfolk about the first of Septimber.

"P. S.—We've come, honey, and brought the letther ourselves. Ye'll find us at Margaret Doolan's; and any one in Norfolk will tell ye where that is."

Of course, Barney was the happiest of men. He could scarcely contain himself for excess of joy. While in the house he succeeded tolerably well; but, as he shut the gate in leaving the yard, he threw his hat high in air, and went through divers evolutions, which, so far as I have observed, were eminently national. The Sarah Porter being bound to Norfolk with a load of staves, Barney embarked the next morning. The colonel had filled his cup of mundane felicity to the brim by offering him a substantial house rent free, and assuring him that his mother and Nora should be as welcome as the flowers in May.

It may have been ten days later that my uncle had invited his neighbors to spend the day with him. The professor and his lady, whose party we had duly attended, were summoned; and they arrived in high feather. The tables groaned that day beneath a genuine old-fashioned Carolina dinner. We sat long over the dessert; and it was agreed before we left the table that the whole party should meet again at Cypress Shore at Christmas. The guests had not been gone half an hour when Barney arrived. With genuine Irish impetuosity, he had carried the heart of Nora by storm; and the bright-eyed girl blushed to her temples when, after making us acquainted with his mother, he exclaimed—

"An' this is me own Nora Mahoney."

The new-comers were soon at home. The little cottage was furnished with a liberality characteristic of the colonel; while Kate and my Aunt Corny, whose hearts Nora seemed to have won at sight, were never weary of devising some new comfort or luxury for her home. Barney called me very mysteriously aside a few days before Christmas for "a bit av discourse."

"What is it, Barney?" I asked.

"Is Misther Bob goin' to be married?"

"Yes."

"At Christmas, is it?"

"Hardly; a year from Christmas, perhaps."

"Maybe you'll be thinkin' o' that same?"

"Perhaps I may, Barney."

"An' I'm tould that the leftinant—is——"

"Yes."

"To Miss Haynes, maybe?"

"Precisely."

"Ochone! I wonder if I'll ever be married?"

"Why not! won't Nora take pity on you?"

"She has."

"Well, then, why not wait a year, and be married at Christmas?"

"I will. Would the colonel consent?"

"Of course, Barney."

"It's a dale o' time to be waitin'."

"Then marry at Christmas."

"No; thin I'd be takin' the lade o' me betthers. Is the ould man, Misther Matthers I mane, is he married?"

"Yes."

"To the widdy is it?"

"Yes."

"Maybe she won't lade him a hornpipe?"

"How?"

Here Barney went through divers pantomimic evolutions not very flattering to the reputation of the person alluded to with regard to sweetness of temper.

"But the children are well-behaved."

"Are they?" replied Barney; "I'm thinkin' he'll wish himself buried in wan av his own cisthins before this day twel'month. Bad cess to the widdys! Ochohne! A year, is it?"

And so saying, Barney took his departure. He told me, a few days afterward, that Nora was deaf to all entreaties to be married sooner than a year from Christmas. He concluded a somewhat labored tirade against the sex by avowing his deliberate opinion that the young women were "mighty nigh aigual to the widdys!"

CHAPTER XXI.

CHRISTMAS.

"The bleak wind whistles. Snow-showers, far and near,
Drift without echo to the whitening ground.

• • • • • •

O laughingly

My little brothers round the warm hearth crowd;
The home-fire blazes broad, and bright, and high,
And the roof rings with voices light and loud."

MRS. NORTON—*The Child of Earth.*

"Is this 'ere house haunted?" asked the professor, as he met me on Christmas morning.

"I hope not."

"Wal, I hope so tew. I was pretty well tuckered aout last night after so long a ride, an' so I s'posed I sh'u'd git a good night's rest, but, Lord bless ye! sech noises I never heerd!"

"Perhaps it was the 'John Kooner!'"

"The John what?"

"I will explain. The negroes have a custom here of dressing one of their number at Christmas in as many rags as he can well carry. He wears a mask, too, and sometimes a stuffed coon-skin above it, so arranged as to give him the appearance of being some seven or eight feet high. He goes through a variety of pranks, which you will have an opportunity to see by and by, and he is

accompanied by a crowd of negroes, who make all the noise and music for his worship the John Kooner."

"Wal, what's all this 'ere firin' and shutin' we heerd 'beout daylight?"

"A part of the celebration of Christmas; as essential to the ceremonies as the hanging up of stockings by the little folk."

The family were soon astir. "Christmas gift! Christmas gift! Wish you merry Christmas!" shouted Molly, as she came to the door.

The morning was beautiful. The air was "frosty, but kindly." A huge fire was blazing in the parlor, and an enormous bowl of egg-nogg was already in preparation. The negroes were lounging about in holiday attire, awaiting the customary Christmas dram. This was duly given them by little Molly, who distributed the whisky with the air of a queen. The colonel came into the piazza rubbing his hands, and caught her in his arms in a genuine doting hug.

Breakfast was announced, and we had barely left the table when a loud shout betokened the arrival of the hero of the Christmas frolic. We hastened to the door. As the negroes approached, one of the number was singing a quaint song, the only words of which that I could distinguish were those belonging to the chorus,

"Blow dat horn ag'in!"

One of them carried a rude deal box, over which a dried sheep-skin had been drawn and nailed, and on this, as if his salvation depended on it, the man was thumping with ear-splitting din. Beside him was another, who kept up a fierce rattle of castanets; another

beat a jaw-bone of some horse departed this life; and still another had a clevis, which he beat with an iron bolt, thereby making a very tolerable substitute for a triangle. The chief mummer, or John Kooner, kept up, in the meantime, all conceivable distortions of body and limbs, while his followers pretended to provoke his ire by thrusting sticks between his legs. One of the party seemed to officiate as bear-leader, to direct the motions of the unknown chief mummer. They approached the piazza, knelt on the ground, and continued to sing, one of them improvising the words while the rest sang in chorus,

"O! dear maussa!

O! dear missus!

Wish ye merry Christmas!"

The expected dram was given them. A few pieces of silver were thrown from the piazza, and they left us, singing a roisterly song, the chorus of which was

"By on de row!"

As they departed, old Peter Law came to the steps to speak with the professor. It was a privilege he was always allowed; and, whenever an old acquaintance came, he never failed to claim it.

"Why, Peter! why in natur don't yaou jine 'em?" asked the professor as he shook hands with him.

"O, I sees de vanity of it, maussa."

"I'm 'fraid yaou're a little mite pharisaical, ain't ye, Peter?"

"Sah?"

"Yaou kind o' think yourself better'n them other niggers, don't ye?"

"I hope I is, maussa."

"You preach sometimes, don't ye?"

"I tries, maussa."

"Wal, they is nothin' like tryin', Peter. Haow du yaou propose to spend the day?"

"Miss Kate gwine to read some hymes to me."

"Wal, I s'pose it's all right, Peter. Here's a quarter for ye."

"T'ank ye, maussa."

"I'm thinkin' that old Peter's voice would help them 'ere fellers amazin'ly. Wonder ef we couldn't persuade him to jine 'em?"

"Never in the world," replied the colonel. "They are getting too pious to sing the old plantation songs."

"Wal, so the doctor was tellin' me. He's a bit of a wag, I guess. Anyhow, he told me 'at he had a huskin' a few days ago, and arter tryin' a long time tew git 'em tew sing, he give 'em some sperits. One of 'em 'peared to think it wasn't no harm tew sing a hymn; and so he struck up the tune of

'Life is the time to serve the Lord,'

and the rest of the niggers sung

'Hoozy! O, John Hoozy!'

for a chorus. Yaou needn't look so hard at me, Mrs. Matters. It's a fact; true's the 'Postles. However, let's go in. I'm rayther partial to a fire."

The guests were soon with us. Mr. Snowden, the young clergyman, the jolly squire, Dr. Jeffreys, Madam Haynes, and Uncle Baldy, with 'their families, were all present. The schoolmaster had been gaining during the

few warm delightful days before Christmas ; and it was thought that the ride and the visit might be of service to him. Before noon the wind hauled to the northeast, and the ground was soon white with snow. It fell rapidly, and the wind sent it whirling against the window-panes, giving us a keen sense of the comforts of the genuine Christmas fires that blazed and roared in three of the principal rooms of my uncle's mansion. The professor seemed devoted to the charming woman whom he had so recently led to the altar, and whose contagious merriment was the life of the party. Bob and Kate were chatting in low tones in one corner of the ordinary sitting-room ; perhaps about the improvements at Bucklersbury—who knows? Mr. Snowden, Lieutenant Buckthorn, the Misses Haynes, and Madam Jeffreys formed another group ; Madam Buckthorn, my Aunt Corny, Madam Butterson, with the colonel and the squire formed a third ; while in another room were Madam Haynes, Helen Jeffreys, the schoolmaster, Uncle Baldy, the professor and his lady, and myself. Meanwhile, Molly and her guests were skipping merrily from room to room.

The table was laden at length with its unwonted burden ; and ample justice was done my uncle's cheer, as well as to the housewifery of my Aunt Corny and the housekeeper. It was sunset when coffee was handed round, and the storm was still raging so violently as to forbid all thoughts of leaving the house. Accordingly, the guests remained. Kate was handed to the piano, and the little flock were treated to a dance. What with music, dancing, chat, and frolic, it was midnight ere we retired. The next day we were out on a fox-hunt. To

my surprise, the professor called for Broomstraw, and my astonishment was complete when I saw him mount with the air of a practiced rider.

"You have learned to ride, it seems," I remarked, as we rode away.

"Wal, yes; but it was long afore I ever mounted this horse. Yaou look surprised. Did yaou never obsarve," continued he, speaking in a low tone, "that most folks like a man that it'll dew to laff at?"

"Then you rode so awkwardly on purpose?"

"Of course I did."

"Why?"

"Dew yaou think these 'ere folks 'ud hev employed me in the cistun line, ef I hadn't gin 'em a chance to laugh at me?"

"Perhaps not."

"I'm sartin they wouldn't. Dew yew remember meetin' me to Norfolk?"

"I certainly do."

"I was sure you would. Yaou expected to git away from me."

"I confess it."

"I knew it all. Inquired all 'beout ye. Knew yaou had lately arriv to New York as first officer of the ship Argo. Hearn yaou was a great favorite with the owners. Found aout 'at yaou hed a rich uncle down here to Bertie. P'raps yaou remember haow powerful I was frightened on the Betty Warren?"

"Yes."

"Wal, I've been four v'yages tew sea; twice round the Horn."

I laughed.

"Mebby you hain't forgotten the Pennsylvany?"

"No."

"Nor the Dismal Swamp Canawl? Nor a good night's rest to Edentown? Nor an upset near Merry Hill?"

"No."

"Wal, I'm an older man than yaou. Permit me to observe that, to git along well in this world, it's necessary tew know an amazin' sight 'beout human natur. I'd no notion o' comin' from Steventown away down here for wool, and then goin' hum sheared."

"You are candid."

"I al'ays was. Come, let's spur up. They're gittin' the start on us."

We met with little success that day; and it was agreed that, on the morrow, we should go to Salmon Creek on a fishing excursion. We went accordingly; and by ten o'clock were floating slowly with the current. We were in three boats; and it so happened that the professor was in the smallest of them and alone.

"What kind o' fish dew ye ketch here?" he asked of Uncle Baldy.

"Perch mostly; but there's some sheep's-heads, so big that you'd think your hook was fast in a snag. There's a right smart chance of 'em a little lower down. You'll have to pull your very hardest to raise one of them."

"O, never yaou fear. I've ketched young whales afore now with a hook and line. See ef I don't raise him ef he bites."

I felt sure that Uncle Baldy had laid a trap for the professor; and after his very candid confession of his

tactics on the day before, I must own that I rejoiced in the prospect of more sport than the most successful day's fishing could have afforded me. I had not long to wait. We had drifted to a bend of the river where the bottom was covered with logs. The professor's hook caught in one of them ; and fancying that he was about to show us with what facility a sheep's-head even could be drawn from the water by a veteran angler, he gave a pull upon the line that would have gone far towards raising the wreck of the Lexington. The line parted, the boat heeled to port, and the professor turned a somerset—which would have immortalized him in the ring—into the river. A shout of laughter greeted him as he rose above the surface, and climbed into the boat (he had pretended, the reader will remember, that he was not a swimmer), and this was succeeded by a roar, as he angrily exclaimed—

“Human natur! E-be-ne-zer! H—l! Ef I ever get into a boat ag'in——”

The remainder of the sentence was lost in the succeeding peals of laughter. We went home without a fish, and there recounted the day's adventure to the ladies. I found letters awaiting me. One of them was from Messrs. Bell & Brothers, and was as follows:—

“NEW YORK, *Dec. 20th*, 1849.

“CAPT. GREGORY SEAWORTHY :

“*Dear Sir*:—We were glad to learn from your last letter that you had pretty nearly concluded to take charge of the *Argo*. May we flatter ourselves that the proffer of one of our best ships will enable you to decide

in our favor? She will be ready in ten days. Waiting your reply, we are,

“Respectfully, your ob’t serv’ts,
“J. BELL & BROTHERS,”

The day had been sunny and pleasant. As the sun was setting, I walked towards the end of the piazza, and mechanically took the letter from my pocket to give it a second reading. There was a vine running along the balustrade and above it; and so intent was I upon the subject of the letter that I had approached nearly to the balustrade at the end of the piazza, when I was startled by a voice at my elbow.

“It must be an important letter, that, to absorb all your attention. It appears that you could not even detect the presence of a lady.”

“Pardon me, Miss Jeffreys. I could detect *your* presence anywhere. Would that I could always detect it so near me!”

Helen looked very intently at the balustrade.

“Will you read the letter?”

“Certainly, if you wish.”

She read it and returned it to me.

“Shall I go?” I asked.

“Your own judgment——”

“Nay, Miss Helen; may I not ask *your* opinion? Shall I go?”

“Yes.”

“And may I hope that there is one here who cares for my success?”

“Most certainly. All your——”

“All my friends, you would say. But will *you* care

for it? Dear Helen! I love you! May I *hope* while I am away?"

There was a low "Yes" in reply, when our conference was abruptly broken off by the nasal tones of the professor, as, with creaking boots, he approached us, and said,

"Wal, ma'am, I believe I must bid you good night. 'Beout time we was tu hum. Haint got all the cotton all ginned aout yit; and Mrs. Matters is gittin' oneasy 'beout the children. Friend Seawether, good night."

"Good by, rather, professor."

"Why, yaou ain't goin tu sea ag'in?"

"Yes."

"Wal, good luck tew ye. I've spent some happy times with ye, and yaou've larnt me a good deal."

"The obligation is mutual. I hope to find you a citizen of Bertie when I return."

"When's that?"

"A year hence. Will you spend the holidays with us?"

"Will I go tu bed? Of course I will."

"It is so understood, then. Good by."

"Good by tew ye!"

Mrs. Matters now appeared at the door. The carriage was in readiness. The colonel handed her into it, and, after a renewal of leave-takings, the professor and his lady drove away. The remaining guests passed the night with us, and on the following morning they too parted.

CHAPTER XXII.

AFFLICTION.

"There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dear lamb is there;
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But hath one vacant chair.

• • • • •

And though, at times, impetuous with emotion,
And anguish long suppressed,
The swelling heart heaves, moaning like the ocean,
That cannot be at rest,

We will be patient, and assuage the feeling
We cannot wholly stay."

LONGFELLOW.

DAME RUMOR is immortal. Her shrine is visited by all scholars. The light upon her altars has never yet grown dim. The heathen deities, however, have been so disrobed in these practical days, that, although a man may review his mythological readings in "the still air of studies," in the privacy of a bachelor *den*, it is somewhat venturesome to betray the fact, even in a book. There is no reverence in these latter days. The gods are travestied; goddesses slandered; divinities flouted. Woods are simply woods; and water is merely—water; with never a divinity to divorce its idea from power-looms and grist-mills. A church is a meeting-house, as

well adapted to the purposes of a boarding-school exhibition, a lecture on mesmerism, or a town meeting, as the town hall itself. Old things take new names, and Antiquity would not know himself in a modern looking-glass. As a case in point: What name does my reader suppose, among all "the names that things take on," has been given in Bertie to classic Dame Rumor? Would she know herself, think you, under the filthy sobriquet of "Niggers' News?"

And, speaking of the practical ideas of the age, the reader may happen to remember that the Hudson and Champlain Canal crosses the Hudson River. A poetic youth was crossing it, not a hundred years ago, as a passenger in a canal-scow, in the undimmed smile of a full moon. With a thought of Venice and her gondolas, perhaps of Portia and Jessica, he ventured to say to the unpoetical man at the helm, defensively posted in the entrenchments of a monkey-jacket and sou'wester, that the Hudson was a beautiful river.

"Wal, y-a-as; they's some o' the finest mill-seats on it of any crick in York State."

There came a report the next morning that the school-master was very ill. We knew very well how such news travels among the negroes in advance even of the telegraph itself, and the rumor caused but little uneasiness. It was decided, however, that we should order the carriage and call at the cottage to ascertain the truth of the report. Accordingly, the colonel, my Aunt Corny, and myself, seated ourselves in the carriage, about ten o'clock that morning, for the drive. On the way, we met Dr. Jeffreys, who was just returning from the cottage; and who, in answer to our questions, gave

a shake of the head which did not bode well for his patient. In a few minutes we were at his bedside.

"Eh? what's the matter, friend Haynes?" said my uncle, with an attempt at cheerfulness.

"O, consumption, I suppose!" said the schoolmaster, gloomily. "The last chapter of a worthless volume."

"Fudge! cheer up, man. We'll have you out a fox-hunting in a week."

The invalid smiled faintly, as if knowing and appreciating the colonel's motive in attempting to encourage him. We spent some hours with him, and it was late when we returned home. I returned to the cottage at nightfall, and passed the night with him. He rallied towards morning, and conversed with me.

"Has my book come?" he asked.

"Not yet."

"It should be here. My publisher promised me that it should go into the hands of the printer as soon as he should receive the MS. Is not to-morrow mail-day?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, it will come to-morrow. It might almost as well not come. Do you remember how Johnson toiled? I like Carlyle for calling him 'the largest soul in all England.' Think of him living on fourpence halfpenny a day! Think of him at the door of that beautiful icicle of a man in high life, Lord Chesterfield. I can fancy how he must have looked and felt, for I have known something of that same patronage myself. I can understand the feelings with which he went from the lordling's door and sought his comfortless lodgings. Don't you honor him for his pride? In his penury he

toiled to the completion of his book ; and, to crown all, he wrote those words which have wakened a kindred throb in the breast of many a despairing scholar. 'I deliver it to the world——' ”

Here he was interrupted by a fit of coughing.

“Don't talk any more, Henry,” said his mother.

“Well, I won't say much more—‘I deliver it to the world,’ said he, ‘with the spirit of a man who has endeavored well. * * * * In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much also is performed ; and though no book was ever spared out of tenderness to the author, and the world is little solicitous to know whence proceeded the faults which it condemns, yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it that the English Dictionary was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great ; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, nor under the shade of academic bowers, but amid inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow.’ And you remember those closing words : ‘I have protracted my work until most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave ; and success and mis-carriage are empty sounds.’ ”

“You are looking at the future gloomily.”

“Not gloomily, but truly.”

“At any rate, let us talk of this to-morrow. You need rest.”

“Yes, that is the word for it. *I do need rest.* I have battled unequally, and I have lost the day. I have not always been understood, and when I *have*, Poverty has so fastened her iron clutch upon me that my soul has

fretted its energies away at the bars of its cage. Yes, I shall find *rest*. That's a great consolation, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"By the by, how are things going on in Congress? Stormy times, are they?"

"I am afraid so."

"Well, we must look to the Senate. The Senate, sir, is our hope. Any man can be at the helm in the clear, sunny day, and in the open sea; but when the storm gathers, when weather-beaten cheeks grow pale, when sail after sail has been furled or torn in shreds from the bolt-ropes, and the face of Old Ocean grows pale in his wrath, there must be a *man*, sir, at the helm—a *man* on the quarter-deck—not one whose knees are knocking together, and whose teeth are chattering with terror, but one in whose calm eye the ship's company may look and feel that all that can be done will be done. Pshaw, sir! they talk insanely, both the North and the South."

Talking in this way at intervals, he at length fell into a sort of coma, which continued for many hours. He then awoke, but sunk rapidly until it was apparent that he could survive but a few hours. I can never forget the scene. The mother came into the sick-room and sat wearily down, burying her face in her hands. Her daughters came in a few minutes afterward, in time to hear the expiring sigh. They looked up in mute surprise at the doctor as the head fell partially over upon the pillow, as if they could not believe it possible that he was dead, and then, comprehending the sad reality, they went to the mother, kneeled at her feet, and mingled their sobs with hers.

Three days afterward we followed the lifeless remains

to the grave. A hymn was sung, a prayer was offered, the clods rattled upon the coffin, and the poor scholar was gone from us forever.

I have hurried over these details, good reader, for they are the record of the darkest hours of my long visit in Bertie. As if in mockery of his hopes, his book came from the publisher's the very day after his funeral. It was a melancholy satisfaction to us to read the pages which he had written while yet vigorous and ambitious of worldly honor. It was as if he, being dead, yet spake unto us, and as we heard the last chapter read by Dr. Jeffreys, his lady asked

"Was it not Keats who said 'My name is writ in water?'"

* * * * *

It was the last evening of my sojourn in Bertie. We had left the table and gathered in a group around the fire.

"So you are determined to leave us?" said my uncle.

"Yes; I have surely paid you a long visit."

"Visit? visit?" replied he, somewhat testily; "why don't you *stay* here? *LIVE* here?"

"I will when I return."

"But why not now? why not now? D—n it all! I'm more than half-vexed with you, Gregory! Is a plantation beneath your acceptance?"

"By no means. I——"

"Perhaps old Bertie hasn't any eyes bright enough to keep you. We are in the habit here in the country of thinking Miss Jeffreys rather a fine young woman; but it seems that——"

"Uncle John!"

"Pardon me ; but you do act so strangely. What are you going to sea for?"

"To earn me a home."

"Well, is not *my* home wide enough for you? Must you desert me in my old age? Is there anything that will keep you?"

"Uncle John! I——"

"Don't uncle me any more! If you will go, why I suppose we must submit to it. I rather like you, after all, for your resolution to go one voyage on the weather-side of the quarter-deck. I suppose I shall see you in the morning?"

"No ; I shall leave before daybreak."

"Well, then, good-by, my boy! You'll be here to spend the next Christmas holidays?"

"Yes."

"God bless you! I——"

Here my uncle coughed, and went growling out of the room. My Aunt Corny, Kate, and Molly gathered round me, and when they had lingeringly bade me good-by, Bob followed me to my chamber, wrung my hand in both his own, and, without uttering a word, left me. Grief came in and lay down silently upon the rug. Old Ponto looked wistfully at me as I lay down upon the bed without undressing ; and, with feelings of loneliness and depression which I have no words to describe, I buried my face with the pillows and wept.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE DEPARTURE.

"Sanded for journeying."—WILLIS.

NYM. "There must be conclusions."—K. HENRY IV.

It was three o'clock on the following morning when Grief came to my bedside.

"Maussa Greg'ry! Maussa Greg'ry!" said he, as he laid his hand upon my shoulder.

"Eh? what is it, Grief?"

"Time you was gwine, maussa."

"Ay, ay!" I answered mechanically; and I sprang from the bed. I was soon in readiness. I walked softly down stairs, looked earnestly around upon the familiar objects in the hall, and was about to open the outer door, when my Aunt Corny came out of the parlor, and, seizing my hand in both her own, burst into tears.

"Good-by! God bless you!" she murmured. "Write to us!" and she re-entered the parlor and closed the door. I walked to the shore of the sound. The Flirt was lying snugly moored at the pier. Grief was not long in loosing and hoisting her sails. A light breeze from the southwest swelled the canvas, and, with a hasty glance at the solitary light in the parlor window, I bade Cypress Shore farewell.

"I was barely in time for the stage-coach at Edenton; and in ten minutes after bidding the faithful Grief good-by, I was on my way, jogging clumsily on in the antiquated unwieldy coach. We were not long in reaching Hertford. As we drove with a coachman's flourish to the steps of the Eagle Hotel (let me commend it to everybody), I was somewhat startled by hearing in familiar tones, "Hello! 'G. S., Merry Hill, Bertie, N. C.' Ef that ain't my friend Seaweather, I'll hoe. Bet a shad on't! Why, haow du yaou du?"

And he thrust his brawny hand far into the coach for a greeting.

"Driver! let down that'ere step, dew!"

"Sartin, sir."

"Goin' tu Norfolk?" asked he, as he seated himself by me.

"Yes."

"Wal, I'm so glad. Yaou couldn't ha' suited me better. Hello! here we go ag'in. I thought the stage was goin' tew stop here awhile. Good-by, Mark, my old friend (the landlord); see ye ag'in when I come back. Al'ays stop to the Eagle, ef I *die* for't. Send everybody I see here, Mark. Good-by, old feller! Mark Hathaway, live forever!"

The horn blew for the last time. Crack went the whip, and away we rattled from hospitable old Hertford, which town I devoutly pray may be immortal.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Professor Matters," said I, as we crossed the bridge that spans the Perquimans.

"Thought you'd got red o' me ag'in, eh?"

"Not this time, professor; for, while I may as well

be frank, and say that I would have done so, we are friends now; and I assure you that few things could have given me so much pleasure as my meeting with you at Hertford. I have left Bertie for some months."

"Wal, I wish *I* had tew."

"You? and but just married?"

"Yes."

Feeling that this was a delicate matter, I forebore to question the professor, and we rode a mile or two in silence.

"You're goin' cap'n, I believe?" said he, at length.

"Yes."

"Yaou don't want a mate?"

"I shall, certainly."

"Haow'd *I* dew?"

"You forget; Mrs. Matters could not accompany you."

"Wal, I calculate I could survive that 'ere sarcum-stance."

"And the youngsters?"

"Old Hacky al'ays looks aout for his childern."

"You puzzle me. Is not Madam Matters——"

"Madam Matters will dew pretty tol'ble well, on'y for them 'ere childern."

"Unruly?"

"Dreadful! Worse'n Pharo'! Worse'n Sampson! Worse'n Goliah! Worse'n the Philistians!"

"You surprise me!"

"It's a melancholy fact. Sailors, you know, call a ship hell afloat when the cap'n's a bit of a Tartar; but, sir, that 'ere house is-hell stationary. Never see the like of it."

"But you surely won't go to sea, and leave your family?"

"I do' know *what* tu du."

"What to do? Why, of course go back, and be master in your own house."

"Ah-h-h!" groaned the professor; "that's easier said'n done."

"True; but it *can* be done."

"Go back and quilt 'em, would ye, like all natur?"

"Yes, if necessary."

"Wal, I b'lieve I will. However, I'll visit hum for a week or tew, an' ef we can't come to terms, why I'll go out ag'in, an' go tu hydraulicin'."

We dined at Elizabeth City, and proceeded on our way. As we approached Norfolk at a late hour, we were conversing about the incidents of our first meeting.

"Well, professor," said I, at length, "how do you like the south?"

"Fust rate. Trew, I can't 'xactly git used to their way-o' talkin'. They say 'tote' for 'carry'; 'a right smart chance' for 'consid'ble'; 'I reckon' for 'I guess'; an' I've hearn a feller say 'dod dog it all' for suthin' 'wus.'"

"But you must remember that the New England people have their provincialisms."

"Wal, I 'spose they hev; but I never noticed 'em."

"You are reconciled to slavery, I suppose?"

"Wal, y-a-a-s, pretty much. I found it so different from what I expected. However, I don't like it much, arter all; though, ef the truth must be said, the widder and the plantation, an' the niggers, was rather hard argyments to git over. But, the fact is, the tarnal critters is

so lazy, an' slow, an' wasteful, an' triflin', as they call it, 'at I b'lieve I'd rayther be without 'em an' with 'em."

Our conversation was interrupted by our arrival at our hotel in Norfolk. From that place to New York the professor was my fellow-traveler. Under the impression that I should sail in a day or two, I took leave of him. My surprise may be imagined when, on the following day, I saw a handbill, running as follows:—

GREAT ATTRACTION!

FREE LECTURE AT THE MUSEUM!

Professor Matters, who has just returned from the South, will deliver, this evening, in place of the usual theatrical performance, a lecture on

HYDROLOGY—A NEW SYSTEM!

Professor Matters will also make some remarks on

THE SOUTH AND ITS INSTITUTIONS,

and give his impressions of the South.

 FOR ONE EVENING ONLY!

I would have given the world to have heard the lecture; but I was to haul out that very evening, and there was so much to be done that I was obliged to forego the pleasure. My last errand on shore was to the post-office, where I was so fortunate as to find letters from Bertie. The first I opened was the following:—

“CYPRESS SHORE, *Jan. 5th*, 1849.

“MY DEAR COUSIN:—In the name of all the gods, why did you steal away without bidding me good-by? The old gentleman says it is ‘just like you;’ and both

Molly and Kate say they will never forgive you. Aunt Corny, it seems, was wakeful enough to shake hands with you. You can have no idea how much we missed you. Grief came back blubbering like a school-boy. Ponto and Alice wandered about all the morning, as if in search of you ; and the day wore away gloomy enough. I never knew my good father so testy, even in an east wind ; and Aunt Corny's knitting has increased from its chronic character to the acute symptoms. I doubt if there is any way to stop her now.

"How I wish I could have seen you before you went ! Let me say in your ear that I would give the world to go with you. The wedding is deferred (may the gods confound all meddlers !) until next Christmas, when, they say, you'll be here, and participate in the solemnities of that mournful occasion ! By the by, did you ever hear the farce 'The Happiest Day of my Life,' wherein, at the solemnization of the marriage, father, mother, relations, and friends, bride and bridegroom, all blubber in chorus ? Aunt Corny must have seen the performance, for she is beginning already to sigh, and wonders 'what she will do when Kate is gone ?'

"I wish I were with you. By the powers I do ! How shall I endure a year in the wilds of Bucklersbury ? The time seems an eternity to me. You, lucky dog ! will walk the quarter-deck of your ship, be seeing new places in distant climes, and have something to divert your attention ; while the presence of Kate will be to me a perennial aggravation ! Why should we wait ?

"I shall get wrathy if I say any more about that. We are well. Dr. Jeffreys and Helen have just come. What

more can I say, save that (you know it already for that matter) I am

“Truly and faithfully, yours always,

“BOB.

“P. S.—The doctor and Helen have just gone. They both begged to be remembered in the family greeting which I send you from all ; and (let me say in your ear) a certain fair lady’s voice trembled as she bade me tell you be with us at Christmas, under pain of perpetual exile. Good-by.”

* * * * *

The year is not yet past, yet I have been a fortnight at home. The foregoing pages are the work of my leisure hours at sea. Would that you could have been with me, my dear reader, as I lingered at Fayal and Gibraltar, and ran along the most beautiful of seas—the Mediterranean. I spoke the frigate C—— on my way home, and Lieutenant Buckthorn is, out of question, now at Norfolk. The young clergyman is here, nominally, though, in fact, he is domiciled at the cottage near Underwood (they call it Sycamore Cottage) with Madam Haynes and her daughters. He is so frank as to say that he finds bachelor quarters at the parsonage unendurable, and the probability is that Miss Mary Haynes will soon make an effort to enliven the place. Miss Laura is observed to pay particular attention to the department of Ship news in all the papers, and it is supposed that the movements of the frigate C—— have a very particular interest for her.

• Barney has avowed his opinion that the almanac-makers are at fault, and that they have omitted the

Christmas holidays in this year's calendar. Nora teases him mercilessly, and he is leading a sad life of it. Bob has done wonders at Bucklersbury, and talks about building and removing there. He will stay, however, (or I am no seer) at Cypress Shore, and Mrs. Kate Smallwood will do the honors, vice Aunt Corny, resigned. There will be four weddings on Christmas day; yes, five, for Barney insists that his own shall take place on that day or never! Nora will probably capitulate.

It lacks ten days of Christmas. The night is beautiful. The new moon has long since set, but the sky is cloudless; the stars are glittering in a sea of silver light that is reflected from the unruffled surface of the Albemarle. The light-boat shows the friendly beacon at the mouth of the Roanoke; the katydid's are noisily chattering in the elms; old Ponto is asleep on the rug, dreaming, if I may judge by his motions, of a battle with some indomitable coon. I can hear, from the kitchen, the notes of Grief's violin; and, if my ears do not deceive me, the stentorian voice of old Peter Law at his evening devotions.

When I left the parlor, an hour ago, to retire to my chamber, the colonel was laughing over the pages of Dr. Holmes' poems. Bob and Kate were pretending to play at backgammon, but, in reality, chatting. My Aunt Corny was knitting, and Molly was bothering her with endless questions about Christmas and the John Kooner.

And now, my dear reader, farewell. As Professor Matters would say, perhaps we may meet again somewhere. I see by the *Norfolk Beacon* newspaper that the frigate C—— has arrived. The lieutenant will soon be here then. Once more——Stay! what is this among the "professional cards?"

B E R T I E.

PROF. F. MATTERS,
PRACTICAL HYDROLOGIST,

Merry-Hill P. O., Bertie, N. C.

 Hydraulic Cisterns constructed on the shortest notice.

Once more, farewell! That you may be prosperous
and happy,

"Till bairns' bairns shall kindly cuddle
Your auld gray hairs,"

and that we may again be fellow-travelers, is the wish
of,

Very HART-ily,
Your ob't servant,
GREGORY SEAWORTHY.

CYPRESS SHORE, 15th December, 1850.

THE END.





